

GBV AoR HELPDESK

Gender Based Violence in Emergencies

Literature Review of Family Based Accommodation, Hosting and Alternative Care Guidance and Procedures for Promising Practice of GBV Risk Mitigation in Private and Community Based Accommodation



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Background to this Literature Review

This literature review is part of a series of knowledge products produced by the Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility (GBV AoR) Helpdesk.¹ It is envisaged that this review will inform the development of a practical guidance resource and a key messages brief that address GBV risk mitigation in private and community based accommodation provided to refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine. This paper focuses on promising practice from shelter, hosting and alternative care guidance and procedures that mitigate gender-based violence (GBV) risks. This literature review recognizes that legislative and procedural frameworks for child protection/child welfare developed and in place within individual refugee host states will apply to girls to support their safety and the best interests of the child. It recognizes the significance of these and does not propose or recommend parallel procedures or systems. By reviewing the available evidence, the aim of this literature review is to identify good practice guidance and lessons learned which mitigate GBV risks in accommodation settings, relevant for women and girls fleeing the Ukrainian crisis. The focus on women and girls in this paper is because they are disproportionately affected by GBV and because they are the predominant population seeking refuge, whilst Ukrainian men are largely remaining behind to defend the country. Importantly, the guidance and procedures featured supports GBV risk mitigation whilst also not reducing the agency and autonomy of women. This approach not only corresponds to established best practice, but also challenges the structural dimensions of women's inequality and subordination across contexts.

The scale of the refugee crisis generated by the war in Ukraine is massive. It is the largest refugee crisis in Europe since World War II, with millions of women and children displaced across multiple countries.² The literature reviewed here will draw from a wide variety of contexts globally in order to identify as many potentially relevant promising practices to respond to the complexity and scale of this challenge. Relatedly, the sources span a range of sectoral and institutional responses to shelter, hosting and alternative care guidance and procedures, including:

- Relevant Child Protection Area of Responsibility guidance and procedures

¹ The Helpdesk is a technical research, analysis, and advice service for humanitarian practitioners working on GBV prevention and response in emergencies at the global, regional and country level. GBV AoR Helpdesk services are provided by a roster of GBViE experts, with oversight from Social Development Direct.

² UNHCR, 2022. "Ukraine situation: Flash Update #6." <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/91719>

- Alternative care and foster care programming guidance and procedures
- Relevant GBViE standards, risk mitigation programming guidance and procedures relating to shelter
- Governmental/council level guidance notes on provision of safe accommodation for women and girls

This paper is intended to complement ongoing GBV response efforts to the Ukrainian crisis while focusing on accommodation arrangements for refugee women and girls, with the exception of refugee transit centers and collective centers. This is because these accommodation centers are facilitated and organized by formal humanitarian actors, while the research scope of this paper is focused on arrangements in private and community based accommodation, where limited oversight and varying levels of regulation are currently in place. As such, the literature review will first explain the types of accommodation available to women and girls before outlining how the humanitarian emergency has exacerbated GBV risks in those types of housing. Then, findings on GBV risk mitigation for girls will be reviewed before focusing on procedures for women and girls. This is because unaccompanied girls, can be exposed to certain risks if and when separated from their parents and families, a scenario that has been documented in the Ukraine context.³ The paper will conclude with a synthesis of key recommendations for GBV risk mitigation priorities for women and girls in private and community based accommodation arrangements, as well as a list of useful resources that can directly benefit interventions and program design.

Research strategy

Resources were identified through online desk-based research related to shelter, hosting and alternative care guidance and GBV risk mitigation procedures/guidance in these settings. The search strategy used key words, phrases and acronyms associated with women and girls and different identities including age, and variations of search terms on violence (e.g. GBV and VAWG and specific forms of violence), and search terms related to response (e.g. participation/inclusion, prevention, risk mitigation, GBV case management, research, guidance etc.) in humanitarian settings. The author also mined the bibliography of key texts and searched relevant journals.

The author searched the websites of relevant organizations including The International Rescue Committee (IRC) and their GBV Responders Website, the Women’s Refugee Commission (WRC), Relief Web operated by UNOCHA, Save the Children, the Global Protection Cluster website, the WHO and various additional UN agency websites.

Limitations

The resources in this annotated bibliography are limited to English documents, and mainly include publicly available online materials. INGOs and other organizations and GBV actors may have produced more resources, which are not easily available online or on request. The majority of resources featured in this bibliography were published between the years 2010 to 2022. Furthermore, due to the urgency of the current emergency this document was necessarily produced in a limited timeframe in early April 2022.

While the literature review reflects the different needs of women and girls across hosted and private accommodation types, it should be stated that individuals who have intersecting vulnerabilities may be at higher risk of violence across contexts, including housing. This could include elderly women, LBT/SOGIESC women and girls, women and girls with disabilities, black and minority ethnic women and girls (particularly Roma in this instance), who are not fully represented in the findings here due to limited availability of evidence. A second limitation affecting the output of this query is the role of Covid-19 on accommodation placement. While the pandemic has impacted levels of violence against women globally⁴, it is unclear if Covid-19 response strategies (i.e. quarantining) in alternative hosting arrangements affect GBV risks. Additionally, there is no available research on the impact of vaccination status

³ UN News, 2022. “Protect unaccompanied children fleeing Ukraine: UN agency chiefs.” <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1113422>

⁴ UN Women. “The shadow pandemic: violence against women during COVID-19.” <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/in-focus-gender-equality-in-covid-19-response/violence-against-women-during-covid-19>

affecting accommodation access, nor guidance on what to do if an individual tests positive for the virus.

Overview of GBV risks across accommodation types for women and girls fleeing the Ukrainian crisis

What are the types of accommodation and accommodation arrangements that Ukrainian women and girls are finding themselves staying in across Europe?

For those fleeing the conflict in Ukraine, there are a number of accommodation types being coordinated and facilitated by formal humanitarian and civil society actors, including the provision of bedspaces in women's refuges/shelters for GBV survivors (that meet local criteria, policies and where space is available), and short stays in refugee transit centers or collective centers. In some instances, refugees are being hosted by close family members. While it is important for women and girls to seek accommodation according to their wishes and need for safety, the focus of this review is on any form of temporary accommodation which is not a refugee transit center, a collective center, a women's refuge/shelter, nor form of hosting by close family members. Instead, the focus here is on alternative arrangements spurred by the urgency of the Ukrainian crisis, which include women and girls being hosted temporarily by private individuals or families volunteering space in their private homes, or the use of vacant homes owned by private individuals/families, such as a second home. This has been coordinated either by individual volunteers, refugee coordination groups⁵, or government schemes across Europe, with varying levels of regulation. Governments and authorities have also been placing Ukrainian refugees in council and social housing, or in other forms of accommodation such as hostels and hotels. Alternative care for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children has also been documented. While renting independently from the private rental market is likely too, this has not featured heavily so far, but could be anticipated in the future. Each of these contexts ranges between regulated, semi-regulated or unregulated arrangements, with associated risk factors outlined in the review.

Definitions of specific types of accommodation and placement

Alternative care arrangements: This is any arrangement, formal or informal, temporary or permanent, for a child who is living away from his or her parents.⁶ There are many kinds of alternative care, but these are generally grouped as informal and formal care types. Informal care is where other family members or people close to the children look after them, this is sometimes referred to as kinship foster care and is common in most countries. Formal care is where the government or a recognized child-care agency places a child in the care of adults who are not family, for example an orphanage.

Foster care: A situation in which a child is cared for in a household outside her/his family. Foster care is usually understood to be a temporary arrangement and, in most cases, the birth parents retain their parental rights and responsibilities.⁷ Foster care is a form of formal alternative care arrangement.⁸

Private hosting accommodation arrangement: This expression refers to people accommodated in private houses or apartments by individuals, either by the host themselves or through the mediation of a civil society actor or local authority. This could include the use of a vacant property made available to refugees fleeing from conflict. The main

⁵ Both new and previously existing housing coordination groups for refugees have been responding,

⁶ Save the Children, 2010. "Guidelines for the alternative care of children. A tool for reviewing the United Nations framework with children – Children's guide." <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/guidelines-alternative-care-children-tool-reviewing-united-nations-framework-children/>

⁷ UNHCR, 2014. "Child Protection Brief: Alternative Care." <https://www.refworld.org/docid/52f0e4f34.html>

⁸ Note that child protection legislative and procedural guidance leads in guiding the implementation of alternative care and foster care programming, and this can differ between countries. Therefore, the scope on alternative care for girls is limited in this paper, with the focus being on extracting transferable guidance from alternative care programming and foster care generally that can be relevant to the current humanitarian Ukraine response.

factor is the “private” nature of the hosting arrangement and the fact that this is not regulated by a mandated public authority.

Social Housing: Although each country defines it differently, social housing is an integral part of housing systems that are designed to fulfil a housing need for those who cannot compete in the market, afford to be homeowners or rent decent housing in the private market.⁹ There are many different types of social housing available and these can be facilitated by the government, councils or social care systems of a country, as well as the private sector.

Residential care settings: Arrangement provided in a non-family-based group setting with paid and/or unpaid staff where some people live and receive care and are placed by order of a competent authority.¹⁰ This can be specific according to needs, such as residential care for children (i.e. infant homes and orphanages), the elderly, people with disabilities. Residential or institutional care should always be a last resort, appropriate only where family-based care arrangements are not possible, or it is decided that family-based care is not in the best interests of the individual.¹¹

How does the humanitarian emergency in Ukraine exacerbate GBV risks in accommodation?

As of March 29, 2022, more than 4 million refugees have fled Ukraine and a further 6.5 million people have been displaced internally.¹² The majority of these refugees are women and children, as men between 18 and 60 have been prohibited to leave the country.¹³ Ukrainian refugees are seeking accommodation across a multitude of countries as they escape the invasion of Russia, with no central body or organization liaising this process. As a result, the GBV risk factors to women and girls can vary based on their country of refuge, including: discriminatory cultural and traditional beliefs and practices; lack of legal protection for women’s and children’s rights; lack of laws against gender-based violence; application of customary and traditional laws and practices that enforce gender discrimination; general insensitivity and lack of advocacy campaigns condemning and denouncing gender-based violence; discriminatory practices in justice administration and law enforcement; and under-reporting of incidents and lack of confidence in the administration of justice.¹⁴ Additionally, if there is a gap or lack of quality and accessible GBV response services including women and girls’ safe spaces, refuges and shelters then this may also be a factor which contributes to reduced awareness of GBV and GBV risks, and reduced reporting of incidents.

Each of these risk factors can present themselves in, or be affected by, the housing or accommodation context. While there has been an outpouring of public support, accessing private hosting accommodation is not currently, at time of writing, regulated, nor monitored or supervised at a pan-European level, and protective mechanisms/processes for private accommodation vary greatly from one country to the next.¹⁵ While hosting arrangements provide refugees with shelter/accommodation and potentially extra opportunities for support, they can also pose GBV and safeguarding risks, with specific risks to women and girls. For example:

- Hosts may not be knowledgeable about how to adequately provide assistance to already vulnerable/at risk individuals, nor be accustomed to providing help in line with the humanitarian Do No Harm principle;¹⁶

⁹ UNECE, 2015. “Social Housing in the UNECE Region: Models, Trends and Challenges.” https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/Publications/Social_Housing_in_UNECE_region.pdf

¹⁰ UNICEF, 2021. “Definitions.” <https://www.unicef.org/eca/definitions>

¹¹ UNHCR, 2014. “Child Protection Brief: Alternative Care.” <https://www.refworld.org/docid/52f0e4f34.html>

¹² UNHCR, 2022. “Ukraine situation: Flash Update #6.” <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/91719>

¹³ CARE and UN Women, 2022. “Rapid Gender Analysis of Ukraine: Secondary Data Review.” https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/RGA%20Ukraine-SDR%20Full%20Report_0.pdf

¹⁴ UNHCR, 2003. “Sexual and Gender-Based Violence against Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons. Guidelines for Prevention and Response.” <https://www.unhcr.org/3f696bcc4.html>

¹⁵ Some countries have established accommodation schemes to respond to the refugee crisis in Ukraine, i.e. the UK’s Homes for Ukraine scheme. While these include stipulations for hosting and some safeguarding measures, there is limited indication of how this is enforced or monitored.

¹⁶ The Do No Harm (DNH) principle seeks to prevent harm to those in need of humanitarian assistance, and applies to all contexts and interventions, and concerns every humanitarian or individual providing humanitarian assistance. It is generally a rule/principle which humanitarians apply, based on judgment and experience, and in the context of this paper should be considered by those providing/ hosting accommodation to guide their conduct.

- Hosts may not be equipped with knowledge and resources to provide help to individuals who have experienced traumatic or distressful events;
- Hosts may not have suitable accommodation for refugees, despite their good intentions. For example, a host might provide space in their living communal living room which has glass doors that do not lock. This could lead to overcrowding and inhibit any privacy or sense of security for women and girls, which could be created by having their own space.
- Hosts may not have access to any additional financial support, hence accommodating refugees might result in overstretching family resources and resilience in certain cases;
- Hosts may not be suited to providing assistance, and a proportion may be malevolent or disingenuous in their intentions of providing assistance and accommodation to women and girls, posing a direct threat to their life and wellbeing. For example, the underlying intention is to accommodate women and girls for the purpose of abusing and exploiting them either directly (i.e. to be abused or exploited by them) or, indirectly (i.e. to be abused or exploited by others e.g. pimps, gangs, traffickers).
- Women and girls may not be aware of their legal rights in these accommodation settings, and unfamiliar with the local protection services available where they could report safeguarding concerns and seek safety or support.

It is already established that refugee women and girls are at greater risk of experiencing violence due to the compounding forms of social exclusion or discrimination they can face in everyday life, i.e. insecure residence status, restricted access to the social welfare system of the refugee hosting country, limited access to the health care system and the job market.¹⁷ Each of these risks can be further compounded by the role of the host, and negatively impact the social exclusion already felt by women and girls. In fact, a recent assessment by International Medical Corps among displaced populations in Poland has already found a high risk of exploitation where shelter and immediate assistance is being provided to Ukrainian refugees by informal actors.¹⁸ Previous conflicts in Ukraine also demonstrate a history of increased GBV during displacement, with a 2019 UNFPA study indicating displaced women and girls' risk of experiencing GBV was three times higher than that for local women who were not displaced.¹⁹

What is gender-based violence risk mitigation?

According to the Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action, GBV risk mitigation comprises a range of activities within humanitarian response that aim to first identify GBV risks and then take specific actions to reduce those risks.²⁰ GBV-related risks can exist in the general environment, within families and communities, and in humanitarian service provision.

In practical terms, GBV risk mitigation means taking actions to:

- Avoid causing or increasing the risk of GBV associated with humanitarian programming
- Facilitate and monitor vulnerable populations' safe access to and use of humanitarian services
- Identify and actively reduce the risks of GBV in the environment and programming/service delivery

GBV risk mitigation should not be viewed as something separate or additional to response work. In fact, integrating GBV risk mitigation actions into programming not only contributes to safer programming, but often results in better

¹⁷ Wells, Anja, Dagmar Freudenberg and Mari Levander, 2019. "Gender-based violence against Refugee & Asylum-Seeking Women – a training tool." http://www.migrantwomennetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/CCM-GBV-training-manual_English.pdf

¹⁸International Medical Corps, 2022. "Ukraine Crisis Situation Update #5." https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/IntlMedCorps-UkraineCrisis_SitRep05.pdf

¹⁹UNFPA, 2019. "Internally displaced women in Ukraine face abuse and exploitation." <https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/19-255-MHPSS-Case-UKRAINE-2019-10-04-1308.pdf>

²⁰ GBV Guidelines, 2021. "What is Gender-Based Violence Risk Mitigation? Background document for UNICEF/CARE/Oxfam Operational Partnerships on GBV Risk Mitigation." <http://gbvguidelines.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/What-is-GBV-Risk-Mitigation.pdf>

outcomes for the response provider in question (i.e. sector, cluster, government bodies etc.).

Protection efforts have already been made, and continue to be made, to strengthen protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and GBV risks to refugees from Ukraine, including the establishment and meeting of the PSEA Task Force and the ongoing efforts of GBV sub-clusters (in the countries where these are operational) and GBV responders.²¹ Across Europe, governments, UN agencies (including UNHCR, UNFPA and UNICEF), INGOs and NGOs are supporting individuals at-risk of GBV according to their mandates. People fleeing Ukraine with vulnerabilities are actively being identified – including those with specific needs, with disabilities, and unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) – and referral pathways are being developed in collaboration with local authorities to ensure that refugees can access necessary services. PSEA and anti-trafficking information materials have also been produced and disseminated at border crossings and at transit centers. These efforts seek to support refugees by raising awareness of GBV risks and increasing monitoring and response to vulnerable groups – actions which could benefit women and girls in shelters, hosting and alternative care settings.

What works to mitigate GBV risks in alternative housing arrangements for refugees

Lessons and guidance from alternative care programming and foster care

Focusing initially on GBV risk mitigation for girls, relevant lessons can be learned from alternative care programming and foster care approaches that encourage positive relationships and dynamics in the home with parents and other caregivers. This is relevant to the Ukraine context considering the high number of orphans and UASC already documented in the media, who are at a heightened risk of violence, abuse and exploitation.²² While it is important to consider the safety measures and gender/ age considerations for alternative care arrangements, these guidelines vary from country to country, and literature on management thereof noticeably limited. Broadly, alternative care programming guidelines emphasize that the family unit is seen as the best place for the growth, wellbeing and protection of children.²³ Where this is not possible, alternative care programming follows two key principles.²⁴ Firstly, the principle of necessity means **children should only be placed in alternative care if it is really necessary and is in the child's 'best interest'**. Secondly, the principle of appropriateness means **children should only be placed in alternative care that suits their individual needs and situation**. In the context of emergencies, organizations and authorities should try to prevent the separation of children from their parents or primary caregivers and should not encourage family separation by providing services and benefits to children alone rather than to families.

For UASC children already abroad, alternative care programming guidelines suggest care arrangements should make every effort not to separate children from their siblings unless there is a clear risk of abuse or other strong reason. Governments should ensure that specific standards are met in the selection of carers and the quality of care and follow-up, as well as the supervision and monitoring of the placement.²⁵ Apart from developing temporary and long-term family-based care for displaced children, efforts and assistance in family tracing must be pursued.

The placement of children in out-of-home care, including foster care, is a form of formal alternative care. Studies comparing children living in large-scale residential institutions to those living in high-quality foster families show that high-quality foster care helps protect children from the negative impacts of institutionalization on brain function, cognitive development and social-emotional wellbeing.²⁶ Thus, **approaches that help keep child victims of violence**

²¹ UNHCR, 2022. "Ukraine situation: Flash Update #6." <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/91719>

²² UNICEF, 2022. "Unaccompanied and separated children fleeing escalating conflict in Ukraine must be protected." <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/unaccompanied-and-separated-children-fleeing-escalating-conflict-ukraine-must-be>

²³ Save the Children, 2010. "Guidelines for the alternative care of children. A tool for reviewing the United Nations framework with children – Facilitator's guide." <https://resource-centre-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/5447.pdf>

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Bick, Johanna, Tong Zhu, Catherine Stamoulis, Nathan A. Fox, Charles Zeanah, and Charles A. Nelson, 2015. "A randomized clinical trial of foster care as an intervention for early institutionalization: long term improvements in white matter microstructure." *JAMA pediatrics* 169, no. 3: 211.

in safe families are in the best interest of the child.²⁷ Alternative care programming guidelines recommend that local foster carers should be identified who can provide children with care and protection while maintaining ties to their family, community and cultural group.²⁸ Recent evidence suggests different types of foster care may be more effective in reducing child maltreatment, including enhanced foster care (i.e. where caseworkers have better training or greater access to services); foster care accompanied by ongoing training support and/or mentoring; and kinship foster care. In fact, a systematic review suggested that **children in kinship care may do better than those in traditional foster care** in terms of behavioral development, mental health functioning, and stability and quality of the relationships with their kinship foster carers.²⁹ This underscores the importance of keeping children with their relatives or family friends where possible.

Importantly, these approaches emphasize that alternative care must protect all children against discrimination, abuse, abduction, trafficking, sale and all other forms of exploitation.³⁰ In the instance where a child suffers abuse or neglect at the hands of people who are supposed to provide them with care, **it is the duty of anyone who is aware of the abuse to get help for the child.** In order to mitigate any risks, **all agencies and facilities offering alternative care services must be registered by their country's social welfare services, and every professional involved in childcare placements should sign a code of conduct that defines their role.** There must be **clear procedures for reporting allegations of misconduct.** Additionally, children must be consulted at every stage of the alternative care decision-making and given opportunities to express their thoughts about the placement, as do the children's parents or legal guardians.³¹

Lessons and guidance from VAC frameworks

Continuing to focus on GBV risk mitigation opportunities for girls, the INSPIRE: '*Seven Strategies for Ending Violence Against Children (VAC) toolkit*' features **technical guidance to support the prevention and response to violence against children aged 0-17 years.**³² Girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence and this surges in emergency contexts, as do other forms of GBV.³³ All of the INSPIRE strategies can be applied in settings affected by conflict, with most interventions providing a description of the core elements that must be present to ensure effectiveness.³⁴ Using an evidence-based approach, the toolkit highlights two parent and caregiver support strategies that are relevant to the accommodation and hosting setting of this query: home visits and parenting programs.

Supporting families, parents and caregivers to learn the benefits of positive parenting can prevent the separation of children from families, the risk of child maltreatment in the home, witnessing intimate partner violence against mothers or stepmothers, and violent behavior among children and adolescents³⁵. **Supporting parents or caregivers through home visits** has been shown to improve positive parenting skills and reduce harsh and abusive parenting in low- and middle-class countries. **Parenting programs in post-conflict settings with displaced populations have also proven effective in mitigating VAC.** International Rescue Committee's work with Burmese migrant and displaced families on the border between Myanmar and Thailand has demonstrated how group-based parenting programs, combined with a limited number of home visits, can reduce physical and psychological punishment, increase positive

²⁷ WHO, 2016. "INSPIRE: Seven strategies for Ending Violence Against Children."

<https://www.end-violence.org/sites/default/files/paragraphs/download/9789241565356-eng.pdf>

²⁸ Supra note 19

²⁹ Winokur, Marc, Amy Holtan, and Keri E. Batchelder, 2014. "Kinship care for the safety, permanency, and well-being of children removed from the home for maltreatment." *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 1.

³⁰ Supra note 19

³¹ Save the Children, 2010. "Guidelines for the alternative care of children. A tool for reviewing the United Nations framework with children – Facilitator's guide." <https://resource-centre-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/5447.pdf>

³² WHO, 2016. "INSPIRE: Seven strategies for Ending Violence Against Children."

<https://www.end-violence.org/sites/default/files/paragraphs/download/9789241565356-eng.pdf>

³³ UNICEF, 2022. "Sexual violence against children." <https://www.unicef.org/protection/sexual-violence-against-children>

³⁴ Child Protection Area of Responsibility, 2019 "Frequently asked questions on INSPIRE in humanitarian settings." https://www.cpaor.net/sites/default/files/2021-02/FAQ%20INSPIRE%20humanitarian_final_Nov.19.pdf

³⁵ Note that positive parenting programs need to include a gender and power analysis and should take into consideration that there are situations where one parent is experiencing abuse at the hands of the other.

strategies to manage children’s behavior, and enhance the quality of caregiver-child interactions.³⁶ Evaluations of these programs also suggest that this type of prevention is less costly than paying for the consequences of VAC.

INSPIRE takes a **skills-based approach to positive parenting, seeking to create safe home environments** and “building a foundation of support and care for children through affection, quality time, praise, and healthy methods of dealing with difficult behavior, such as positive discipline that teaches pro-social behavior.”³⁷ These interventions can have a long-term impact, with one longitudinal study in the USA reporting a 48% reduction in child abuse and neglect among families who received the home intervention compared to those that didn’t.³⁸ Home visits and parenting programs create opportunities to monitor child protection in the home or hosting arrangement in the short term, while also creating long-term opportunities for social norm change – a key factor in GBV prevention. Ultimately, however, these interventions do require extensive adaptation to be regionally relevant, and could be more suitable in a post-emergency phase of crisis.

Lessons and guidance from social care

Where the focus of social care guidance is response to women and girl survivors of GBV, namely domestic and intimate partner violence, there are some relevant recommendations to service providers that could be transferred to private hosting accommodation arrangements. Firstly, the sector acknowledges that while women’s refuges and shelters are vital and provide a range of support services, alternative accommodation models are needed to meet the range of needs and safety criteria expressed by women.³⁹ For example, the criteria for women’s shelters sometimes include age limits for male children, meaning women with older sons would be unable to qualify for these services, and in the interest of keeping the family unit together, an alternative placement is required. Therefore, the option for social housing arrangements through governments or organizations should be made available to refugees from Ukraine.

As such, social care organizations have identified the unique position of housing providers in being able to identify domestic abuse and prevent escalation of violence by offering support and guidance to survivors.⁴⁰ There are several recommendations for where housing providers can implement policies and procedures, risk management, training, and publicity or awareness to mitigate GBV risks in their units or buildings (see Table 1). This is especially relevant for social housing, where systems are already in place for the management and monitoring of properties by the government or charitable organizations. Some countries also encourage these actions by providing accreditation to the housing providers, for example, the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation in the UK is recognized in the government's Ending Violence against Women and Girls Strategy: 2016 to 2020.⁴¹

Table 1- Opportunities for housing providers to mitigate domestic violence (Adapted from SafeLives42)

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>
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³⁶ International Rescue Committee, 2014. “Building happy families. Impact evaluation of a parenting and family skills intervention for migrant and displaced Burmese families in Thailand.”

³⁷ WHO, 2018. “INSPIRE Handbook: action for implementing the seven strategies for ending violence against children.” <https://www.end-violence.org/sites/default/files/paragraphs/download/9789241514095-eng.pdf>

³⁸ Olds, David, Charles R. Henderson Jr, Robert Cole, John Eckenrode, Harriet Kitzman, Dennis Luckey, Lisa Pettitt, Kimberly Sidora, Pamela Morris, and Jane Powers, 1998. "Long-term effects of nurse home visitation on children's criminal and antisocial behavior: 15-year follow-up of a randomized controlled trial." *Jama* 28: 1238-1244.

³⁹ Shenai, Sonal, Samantha Jury-Dada, Danielle Mcleod and Miranda Webb, Safe Lives. “Safe at Home: The case for a response to domestic abuse by housing providers.” <https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Safe%20at%20Home%20Report.pdf>

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ DAHA, 2022. “Accreditation for housing providers.” <https://www.dahalliance.org.uk/what-we-do/accreditation-for-housing-providers/what-is-accreditation>

⁴² Supra note 34

Raise awareness of violence in staff and tenants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a domestic abuse policy, for staff and tenants • Display posters from local specialist support services to encourage self-referrals • Train staff at all levels and teams to ensure they can identify abuse and signpost support confidentially and safely as early as possible • Require staff to refresh training on a specified regular basis
Early identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create relationships with local domestic abuse specialist services and/or provide in-house services to ensure staff have clear referral pathways for survivors once domestic abuse has been identified or disclosed • Ask new tenants about domestic abuse routinely and sensitively to consider any safety measures required
Tackle the perpetrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include the perpetration of abuse in tenancy agreements as a breach of tenancy so perpetrators can be held accountable and potentially evicted as part of a multi-agency response (with the police force and other services) • Hold perpetrators accountable in any anti-social behavior (ASB) action taken and do not criminalize survivor. An assessment of risk to the survivor should be undertaken, ideally alongside a domestic abuse specialist service
Engage in a coordinated multi-agency response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input into safety planning with survivors of domestic abuse and domestic abuse specialist services • Work with agencies such as the police to ensure the safety of survivors so that staying at home is a safe and realistic option for more survivors

While recommendations for violence prevention and mitigation in social housing can vary across countries, municipalities, and councils, encouraging the implementation of housing policies and response services in the event of an incident is good practice in ‘regulating’ housing to support women and girls when incidents occur. Similarly, these policies can help mitigate risks of repeat violence through the practice of sanctuary schemes, a multi-agency survivor-centered approach focused on enabling households at risk of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes and reduce repeat abuse through the provision of enhanced security measures and support.⁴³ Sanctuary schemes can employ target hardening, the (improved) use of physical security measures to deter or prevent violence, to achieve this, i.e. through the fitting of additional locks and chains on doors, or the installation of CCTV and security lighting.⁴⁴

Lessons and guidance from housing and refugee groups or initiatives

While a network of refugee housing groups has emerged in the wake of the war in Ukraine, several organizations have been providing housing solutions to refugees and asylum-seekers across Europe for years. Generally, there are two housing models: voluntary temporary accommodation in private homes or facilitated rental opportunities in shared accommodation. In reviewing standard operation procedures for either model, there are some GBV risk mitigation practices in place that could support women and girls.

In the UK, Refugees at Home is an organization that matches refugees to private hosting accommodation

⁴³ Vagi, Rebeca, 2021. “Sanctuary Scheme Toolkit.” In The Whole Housing Approach . https://www.dahalliance.org.uk/media/10661/15_-w-ha-sanctuary-scheme.pdf

⁴⁴ Waltham Forest Council Housing Department, 2021. “SAFE Homes: Housing Domestic Abuse Prevention Procedure.” <https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-02/Safe%20Homes%20Housing%20Domestic%20Abuse%20Prevention%20Procedure%20Feb%202022.pdf>

arrangements.⁴⁵ Their standardized operating procedure stipulates a referral process from registered caseworkers is necessary before any refugees placements are made. The referral interview records the location preferences of the applicant, and length of time needed for placement, as well as any vulnerabilities expressed by the refugee. The organization also screen each host, interviewing them and vetting them through two references, and by screening their home and local environment for safety before onboarding them. This process includes discussions on the vulnerable status of refugees and the power differentials between hosts and their refugee guests. Other placement procedures are also in place to find the best ‘fit’ between a host and a guest, for example female refugees are not placed in male only households, and cultural differences are considered (i.e. religious beliefs or sexual orientation). An organizational safeguarding policy is in place, outlining the rights and responsibilities of hosts and guests, including the need for both parties to be aware of the policy, as well as reporting mechanisms and procedures for any instances of abuse. Once a placement is decided, the team and caseworker will regularly check in on the host and refugees, with hosts reminded of the power dynamics involved and the particular care necessary in developing any relationship beyond that of host and guest. Business relationships and financial agreements are deemed unlikely to be appropriate for legal reasons, and hosts are also informed that sexual relationships are never appropriate and will result in placements ending and hosts being removed from the organization’s register. A scan of other organizations in Europe suggest they largely function according to the same principles, such as Positive Action in Housing,⁴⁶ Takecarebnb,⁴⁷ and Comme à la Maison (CALM)⁴⁸ – however, the perception of these organizations and their impact have not been reviewed in detail for this query. It should be noted that some of these organizations do not guarantee refugee placements for all applicants; for example, unaccompanied minors, individuals with severe mental health issues, individuals with alcohol or substance abuse problems, and individuals with serious convictions are not hosted by Refugees at Home. This suggests that women and girls with multiple intersecting vulnerabilities may not be considered in the aforementioned guidance.

Private rental opportunities are also facilitated for refugees by voluntary organizations across Europe, such as Refugees Welcome International.⁴⁹ The organization operates in 14 countries (12 in Europe, Canada and Australia), connecting hosts with a spare room to refugees and providing support throughout the tenancy, from preparing a rental agreement and arranging the moving process, to providing help in case any problems arise.⁵⁰ Different branches in each country offer a varying range of support services, for instance the Polish Welcome branch offer integration focused services, such as language courses, legal support, psychological support for adults and children, and a ‘volunteer friend’ who helps familiarize the refugee with their new environments. Program participants, volunteers and hosts are also invited to regular integration meetings, creating opportunities to establish peer groups and network within the new environment. The flat share model of this organization and others like it (i.e. Coexistence Welcome in Germany⁵¹) **facilitate refugees into a shared living arrangement in order to foster a sense of community and ease the process of resettlement.** Although not explicitly stated, this integration focus reduces the likelihood of social exclusion or isolation, known risk factors for GBV. This is because women and girls’ social exclusion through lack of access and participation in a community or nation’s political, social and economic life limits their equal access to education and employment, which can lead to marginalization, repression and discrimination.⁵²

In light of the mass displacement from Ukraine, some hosting guidelines have already been adapted by professionals to prepare private hosts on what to expect when hosting people fleeing conflict. These recommendations would be relevant for either aforementioned model. One example comes from a psychologist specializing in psycho-traumatology from the Polish HumanDoc Foundation, who lists the behavioral and emotional needs to anticipate and

⁴⁵ See Refugees at Home: <https://www.refugeesathome.org/>

⁴⁶ See Positive Action in Housing: <https://www.paih.org/get-involved/host-a-refugee-in-your-home>

⁴⁷ See Takecarebnb: <https://takecarebnb.org/>

⁴⁸ See Comme à la Maison (CALM): <https://co-citoyens.fr/en/projects/2-calm-comme-a-la-maison>

⁴⁹ See Refugees Welcome International: <http://www.refugees-welcome.net/>

⁵⁰ There is no further elaboration to what or how problems will be resolved, nor any mention of safeguarding policies for this example.

⁵¹ See Coexistence Welcome: <https://zusammenleben-willkommen.de/>

⁵² Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2006. “Displaced Women and girls at Risk: Risk Factors, Protection Solutions and Resource Tools.”

<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/DF67C6D0045ABAEEC1257129005C5929-Displaced%20Women.pdf>

respect in preparation for hosting a refugee in their home.⁵³ This includes guidance on supporting people with special needs and helping traumatized people, as well as a statement on the power dynamics between hosts and refugees. Although detailed, there is no mention of needs specific to women and girls, nor is there reference to reporting mechanisms for abuse or maltreatment. Based on best-practice from other sectors, this indicates a gap in the voluntary, non-mandated guidance that is publicly available to private hosts.

Lessons and guidance from humanitarian contexts

Addressing GBV is of critical concern to the shelter, settlement and recovery sector (SS&R) in humanitarian action and provides valuable insight to the process of allocating or arranging private host accommodation. IASC Guidelines on the topic suggest “risks of GBV can be reduced through SS&R programming that continuously monitors for and develops strategies to address emerging GBV-related safety risks related to shelters, settlements and non-food items.”⁵⁴ The guidelines go on to recommend **women and other at-risk groups should be involved in the allocation process for their shelter, with the opportunity to make choices based on their needs and safety concerns.** This includes LGBTI persons, who can be at significant risk of harassment, discrimination, and physical or sexual assault, especially in contexts where there is widespread prejudice against them. Specifically, consultations should take place with local organizations that support LGBTI groups to consider culturally sensitive strategies, for instance, the consideration that communal ‘safe houses’ may not be the safest option for LGBTI persons. The guidelines also recommend that **transgender individuals should be allowed to choose the housing option that is safest for them, especially where shelters are sex-segregated.**⁵⁵

Secondly, the guidelines recommend prioritizing **GBV risk reduction in the allocation of shelter itself.**⁵⁶ For instance, it should be ensured that personal accommodation is available for women, girls and at-risk groups, and where possible, this should be positioned away from high-trafficked areas such as distribution points. The Sphere standards⁵⁷ for space and density should also be implemented to avoid overcrowded living arrangements – overcrowding can add to family stress and potentially increase intimate partner violence and other forms of domestic violence. **The safety and privacy of sleeping areas should also be ensured,** providing strong and non-transparent surroundings; doors and windows that lock; and (where age-, gender- and culturally appropriate) family and sex-segregated partitions. Lastly, the guidelines emphasize the importance of **establishing clear reporting mechanisms for the community to register shelter-related issues concerning safety and GBV.** These feedback systems should be made known to all members of the community, and information about these mechanisms regularly communicated.

Relatedly, the IASC Minimum Standards for Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies Programming advocate for safety and risk mitigation across all humanitarian sectors. This includes **support from GBV specialists to humanitarian actors,** including shelter providers, by providing accurate and accessible information on available GBV services and referral processes; facilitating support to non-GBV sectors and actors to safely and ethically analyze the GBV risks in their environment; and, providing technical inputs to other sectors’ coordination and programming actions on GBV risk mitigation.⁵⁸ **Several tools can be used by GBV specialists to mitigate GBV risks in refugee accommodation**⁵⁹, including (regular) safety audits of the accommodation and its environment; focus group discussions with women

⁵³ Podleska, Katarzyna, 2022. “Guidelines for people hosting refugees at home.”

<https://multikulti.bg/en/news/guidelines-for-people-hosting-refugees-at-home>

⁵⁴ IASC, 2015. “Shelter, Settlement and Recovery,” in Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action: Reducing risk, promoting resilience and aiding recovery.

<https://gbvguidelines.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/TAG-shelter-08-26-2015.pdf>

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Sphere, 2018. “Sphere Handbook: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response.”

<https://handbook.spherestandards.org/en/sphere/#ch001>

⁵⁸ IASC, 2019. “The Inter-Agency Minimum Standards for Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies Programming.”

https://gbvaor.net/sites/default/files/2019-11/19-200%20Minimun%20Standards%20Report%20ENGLISH-Nov%201.FINAL_.pdf

⁵⁹ International Rescue Committee, 2013. “GBV Emergency Assessment Tools.”

<https://gbvresponders.org/emergency-response-preparedness/emergency-response-assessment/>

and girls to understand their perception of security and protection concerns; and community mapping exercises to assess knowledge of services available to women and girls, or the community's perception of areas that present risks to women and girls. Each of these tools can be adapted based to the context or type of accommodation available.

Past responses to humanitarian crises also provide valuable lessons for mitigating GBV risks in alternative accommodation arrangements for women and girl refugees. The Standard Operating Procedures for Safe Homes for GBV Survivors in Somalia⁶⁰ outlines a standard for preventing sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), specifying that **a code of conduct should be in place based on the 6 principles for PSEA.**⁶¹ All shelter and safe space management should be oriented on these procedures and made familiar with the provisions, including appropriate measurements for handling complaints. Individuals present in this form of care should also be informed of the procedure for lodging complaints. This suggests that the humanitarian principles of care should extend to those volunteering humanitarian support by hosting private accommodation to refugees and reinforces the need for standardized codes of conduct and established reporting mechanisms to increase accountability.

Guidance from Governments and European Parliament

The risks and experiences of GBV by women and girl refugees can vary greatly based on the country where they seek refuge and asylum, as such there is a wide array of government guidance responding to the needs of women and girl refugees. Considering the European context of the war in Ukraine, the attention here is focused on guidance from European countries.

In an examination of barriers to female refugees and asylum seekers in accessing appropriate housing and integration opportunities across member states, the European Parliament concluded ***“policies aimed at guaranteeing asylum seekers and refugees’ rights and wellbeing cannot be gender-neutral, because women have to face gender-specific challenges in the host country, as a consequence, reception and integration policies that are not gender-sensitive are destined to fail.”***⁶² Based on their findings, the European Parliament have compiled extensive recommendations for living conditions, housing solutions and shelter assistance for women and girls, including the **necessary involvement of refugee women in decision-making processes around housing and shelter** (which aligns with UNHCR's 2001 commitments to women).⁶³ Other measures recommended to support women and girls specifically include the **need for separate housing for men and women, with the exception of families; assuring women's access to basic commodities such as water, sanitary facilities, and food supplies, and guaranteeing that sanitary facilities are separated for men and women;** preserving family and community unity if not otherwise requested; and preserving the possibility for refugee single women to live separately from single men and with their children if they have any. The research also draws on UNHCR suggestions to prevent and avoid GBV, suggesting overcrowding and multi-household dwellings should be avoided.⁶⁴

In turn, public institutions are recommended to improve measures aimed at providing access to proper housing solutions, which allow refugee women to be independent and to have access to basic social services and activities, such as public transport, children's schools, job opportunities, and healthcare facilities.⁶⁵ It is also important that **accommodation solutions allow refugee women not to live in isolation, but as integrated peer groups within the**

⁶⁰UNFPA, 2021. “Standard Operating Procedures for Safe Homes for GBV Survivors.” https://somalia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/shelter_operator_sop.pdf

⁶¹ IASC, 2016. “Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)” in Global Standard Operating Procedures. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/iasc_psea-global_standard_operating_procedures_june_2016_1.pdf

⁶² Sansonetti, Silvia, 2016. “Female refugees and asylum seekers: the issue of integration.” [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/556929/IPOL_STU\(2016\)556929_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/556929/IPOL_STU(2016)556929_EN.pdf)

⁶³ In 2001, UNHCR made five commitments to refugee women which relate to: women's and girls' membership and participation in decision-making; registration and documentation; tackling gender-based violence, including domestic violence; participation in food distribution; and providing sanitary materials to women and girls of concern (Martin, 2011).

⁶⁴ UNHCR, 2003. “Sexual and Gender-Based Violence against Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons. Guidelines for Prevention and Response.” <https://www.unhcr.org/3f696bcc4.html>

⁶⁵ Sansonetti, Silvia, 2016. “Female refugees and asylum seekers: the issue of integration.” [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/556929/IPOL_STU\(2016\)556929_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/556929/IPOL_STU(2016)556929_EN.pdf)

host society, encouraging women to stay in touch and support each other. Where refugee women and girls have been exposed to domestic violence, either in the country of origin or in the host country, alternative and safe housing solutions should be guaranteed to find immediate safety and start the recovery and trauma processing.

Conclusion

The war in Ukraine has resulted in the fastest growing refugee crisis since World War II, with the majority of those fleeing being women and children.⁶⁶ Due to the scale of this humanitarian crisis, alternative forms of accommodation solutions other than refugee camps, transit centers, women's shelters or refuges, or hosting by close family members are in use. These alternative arrangements include women and girls being hosted by individuals or families volunteering space in their private homes, where limited regulation, monitoring or supervision is in place. At each stage of their displacement journey, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls are especially vulnerable to GBV risks, including in the allocation of, or placement in, accommodation and shelter – a likely risk in these alternative accommodation placements too. Aware of this, aid agencies are emphasizing the urgent need to ensure that accommodation and basic services are sufficiently covered by the authorities and humanitarian actors.⁶⁷

Recommendations and guidance for mitigating GBV risks relevant to private hosting accommodation arrangements have been reviewed here, drawn from a variety of resources and sector responses to shelter, hosting and alternative care solutions and provisions. In some instances, the literature has referred to refugees or asylum-seekers without distinguishing women and girls specifically, in which case broader research has been consulted to connect the relevancy to women and girls' needs. Child-focused and relevant sector frameworks, guidance and procedures have also been reviewed.

Interestingly, while a number of accommodation types and placements and their corresponding GBV risks have been included here (i.e. emergency shelter, private hosting, social housing, alternative care and foster care), some consensus is evident on how to mitigate GBV risks across them. Similarly, some GBV risk mitigation recommendations are the same where guidance has focused on the urgency of ongoing humanitarian crises and need for gender-sensitive shelter, and where more long-term, proactive suggestions for integration processes have been emphasized. The majority of GBV risk mitigation guidance promote measures that avoid causing or increasing GBV within private hosting accommodation arrangements; monitor women and girls' safe access to and use of housing arrangements; and identify and actively reduce risks of GBV within and surrounding the accommodation. Most significantly, maintaining the agency and autonomy of women and girls was repeatedly emphasized with guidance reinforcing the need to listen to women and girls, and allow their views to influence the actions that are taken to stop harmful GBV practices, including in accommodation settings. A synthesis of the complete recommendations is included below.

Recommendations

- For managed and regulated placements: place girls in alternative care accommodation only if it is really necessary and, in the child's, best interest. Where deemed necessary, the child should only be placed in alternative care that suits their individual needs and situation, with appropriate consideration of specific risks to girls.
- Keep immediate families together, but if this is not an option prioritize the placement of girls in safe family or kinship environments and ensure alternative care accommodation arrangements only if absolutely

⁶⁶ UNHCR, 2022. "Ukraine situation: Flash Update #6." <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/91719>

⁶⁷ International Medical Corps, 2022. "Ukraine Crisis Situation Update #5." https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/IntlMedCorps-UkraineCrisis_SitRep05.pdf

necessary or appropriate. Every effort should be made not to separate unaccompanied asylum-seeking girls from their siblings unless there is a clear risk of abuse or other strong reason.

- Follow the relevant alternative care guidance within country and make sure that all agencies and facilities offering alternative care accommodation services are registered by their country's social welfare services, and every professional involved in childcare placements should sign a code of conduct that defines their role. There must be clear procedures for reporting allegations of misconduct. It should be universally messaged to that it is the duty of anyone aware of abuse against a child to seek help for the child. If these procedures are in place and followed as designed, then associated GBV risks can be reported and mitigated.
- Mitigate violence against girls by encouraging skills-based approaches to positive parenting and caregiving through home visits or parenting programs. This is in recognition that the conflict and displacement can result in parents struggling with stress and disruption to usual parenting routines and support structures.
- Work with housing providers to implement policies and procedures, risk management, training, and publicity or awareness to mitigate GBV risks in their units or buildings. They are in a unique position able to display posters throughout buildings for local specialist support services; include the perpetration of abuse in tenancy agreements as a breach of tenancy; and work with GBV specialist services to input into local safety planning.
- Conduct thorough referral and vetting checks of private accommodation hosts, including visits to accommodation and surroundings to ensure the arrangement is habitable and safe for women and girls to be placed in. This includes access to a private space with working locks on doors and windows. Where the legislative or procedural frameworks of the country and its law enforcement agencies permit, it is recommended that vetting and barring processes for accommodation hosts include cross-referencing sex offender registers, to prevent women and girls' placement in accommodation with proximity to them or accommodation owned by them.
- Ensure private accommodation hosts are made aware of differential power dynamics and take particular care in developing any relationship beyond that of host and guest (i.e. business relationships and financial agreements). Inform hosts that sexual relationships are never appropriate. This could be formalized through a code of conduct agreement based on the six PSEA principles.
- Provide hosts with guidance on what to expect when hosting people fleeing conflict and who are displaced from their homes, including resources where they can access ongoing support. This should include cultural and language-specific advice, as well as a list of available GBV services and other types of social support in the area.
- Hosts and appropriate support agencies should orient displaced women and girls to their new private hosting accommodation arrangement and the surrounding area/community. Help women and girls to understand their new local area and key support institutions and where they are located (e.g. doctor/hospital/pharmacy, police station, community center etc.) supports safety and mitigates risk. Provide women and girls with local emergency telephone numbers.
- Humanitarian agencies, GBV specialist services, community associations and law enforcement agencies may be well positioned to provide women and girls with personal safety alarms which can be deployed by them when they feel at personal risk.
- Establish clear reporting mechanisms for women and girls to report safety issues and concerns with their accommodation and host. These feedback systems should be made known to all members of the community, and information about these mechanisms regularly communicated.
- Provide sex specific services for women and girls, including separate housing options to men (with the exception of keeping families together), and separate sanitary facilities.
- Avoid placing women and girls in overcrowded and multi-household dwellings.

- Offer integration focused services in order to establish a community and peer groups for women and girls and reduce the risks of social exclusion.
- Give women and girls the opportunity to make accommodation choices based on their needs and safety concerns by involving them in the shelter allocation process. Where accommodations are advertised, platforms should indicate the composition of the host setting (i.e. single woman, or family of four with young children) to contextualize this decision. Consultations with local specialist organizations can also help provide context to support informed choices, for instance for transgender women to choose the housing option that is safest to them.
- Seek support from GBV specialists, including regular safety audits of the accommodation and its environment; focus group discussions with women and girls to understand their perception of security and protection concerns; and community mapping exercises to assess knowledge of services available to women and girls, or the community's perception of areas that present risks to women and girls.
- Understand the government and regulatory frameworks of different types of accommodation in each specific country hosting women and girls from Ukraine, as well as the authorities responsible for protection and law enforcement. Where there are no policies in place to regulate the different types of accommodation, including private hosting accommodation arrangements, these should be developed and include a range of risk mitigation elements.
- Ensure that all accommodation arrangements and responses are gender-responsive and intersectional, providing shelter to all refugee women and girls.

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The GBV AoR Helpdesk

The GBV AoR Helpdesk is a unique research and technical advice service which aims to inspire and support humanitarian actors to help prevent, mitigate and respond to violence against women and girls in emergencies. Managed by Social Development Direct, the GBV AoR Helpdesk is staffed by a global roster of senior Gender and GBV Experts who are on standby to help guide frontline humanitarian actors on GBV prevention, risk mitigation and response measures in line with international standards, guidelines and best practice. Views or opinions expressed in GBV AoR Helpdesk Products do not necessarily reflect those of all members of the GBV AoR, nor of all the experts of SDDirect's Helpdesk roster.

The GBV AoR Helpdesk

*You can contact the GBV AoR Helpdesk
by emailing us at:
enquiries@gbviehelpdesk.org.uk*

*The Helpdesk is available 09.00 to
17.30 GMT Monday to Friday.*

Our services are free and confidential.