

## Yuliia's Story

Yuliia arrived in Ireland in March 2022 with her two children, mom and sister. After experiencing bombing for two weeks, she decided she needed to move to safety. Yuliia, along with her family were living in a hotel in Dublin for two months before being moved to the outskirts of Portlaoise with no access to schools or transport. Eventually, she reached out to Helping Irish Hosts who managed to find her family a self-contained property in Killarney. Their Host Shirley lives in Dublin and has supported them since the beginning of their stay.

My name is Yuliia and I am from Ukraine, Boryspil city. I have two kids, 9 and 8 years old. I also have my mom and my sister here. We have been living in a host house in Killarney since November 2022. Our host's name is Shirley. She, with her daughters, lives in Dublin, and she kindly gave us her property (a house) to live in for this time. We moved to Ireland in March 2022. After being under bombing for two weeks, I have decided to take my kids somewhere safe. The only relatives we had were in Ireland, so they could give us a hand and help with information about the country.

At first we lived in Dublin in the Address Hotel, then after two months we were moved to Portlaoise by IPAS, then we had to move to Kilkenny also by IPAS. As Ireland is struggling from the availability of places to live in, people all over the Ukraine have been moved to a different type of hotels, hostels, etc. I am very grateful to IPAS who helped us with a living place, but unfortunately our last experience of being moved was not very good. We lived outside the city with no transport, no schools nearby. In one small room were 5 of us. It was ground floor and very cold with mould all over the walls. That's why we have decided to search a place where we can move, a better place for living for our children.

We wrote to a lot of different organisations, but nobody answered. Or if they do the only answer was that only IPAS can move us. The only organisation which answered our response was Helping Irish Hosts organisation. And they were extremely fast in their answer, and even faster - they found a host family for us! It was kind of a "miracle" for us at that moment. Because we were desperate and thought there is no chance. It was so bad we even thought to go back to Ukraine. **But thankfully to girls who works in Helping Irish Hosts organisation we finally find a possibility to live, but not to survive.**

It was our first time being hosted. But I was not afraid, because I knew that Irish people are very kind and caring. And I was right. Our host family is lovely! These people are very understanding, very helpful and caring. They took care of everything we needed for our life. Shirley wrote a welcome letter to us and prepared food for our first day. We were amazed by the house and Shirley's attitude to us



And it goes through all the time we have been living in their house. They always writing to ask how are we and do we need any help. So that our relationships are very warm. They have visited us and we have visited them in Dublin.

My experience is wonderful and I can give only positive feedback of being hosted. **What I can advise for the people who want to find a host family is to be sincere, to be kind and understanding.** And to try to find contact with a person from the start of your communication. Do not behave like everybody owes you something. Don't be shy to talk about some small issues about your living like for example house issues or bills). **The more you talk - the more you will understand each other's needs.**

The same could be advice for the individual who wants to be a host. **Try to know as much as you can about the people you will host, take care of your property, so that people see you care about them staying, be sincere and try to understand the situation Ukrainians happened to be in.**

Thanks to Helping Irish Hosts we have a great possibility to live in a beautiful town, which is very touristic and lovely. There are a lot of possibilities for Ukrainians to integrate. Such as different courses (English, Computers, Beauty etc.), GP and clinics for Ukrainians, schools for children. Me and my mom are now studying in Kerry College Campus in Killarney. Kids go to Holy Cross and The Mon schools. We live in the town centre, we have everything close: shops, schools, theatres, cafes, trams and buses.

So if you really need help in property for living or if you want to be a host but are still afraid to let unknown people into your life, now I hope you will have more information from our experience!