

# Ukrainian refugee family stuck in motorway hotel

By [Daniella Theis](#) 30th August



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**A UKRAINIAN refugee family set to move to Inverclyde have been left in limbo in a motorway hotel 50 miles away for two weeks waiting to be rehoused.**

Svetlana Zinchenko, 34, came to the UK with her family to flee what she says was 'hell on earth' in the Russian-occupied Kherson region.

She was ready to move to Inverclyde after her husband secured sponsorship to come here through a government-run scheme.

However, the family have instead been left stranded in a hotel in central Scotland for the last fortnight, with no meals provided, no facilities to cook food, no nearby amenities and say they do not know why.

Svetlana, who is a trained lawyer, said: "We were told we had to live another week in a hotel with twenty pounds in our pocket.

"I can't cook anything in the hotel and there are no places where you can eat normally.

"I'm desperate, and don't know what to do."

Svetlana and her young son had been originally due to locate to Lincolnshire in England.

However, Svetlana's sponsorship there fell through at the same time her husband - who had previously not been allowed to leave Ukraine - received confirmation that he would be sponsored in Inverclyde.

This led the family to make the decision to move to Scotland together.

Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) is responsible for providing them with supporting payments and housing at the moment, while Inverclyde Council is overseeing the sponsorship scheme process and checks that would allow the family to move to the area.

Semantha Neal, assistant director in public health at LCC,

say they are doing 'all they can' to help the family while they wait for the required checks to be carried out north of the border.

She said: "The family is the responsibility of LCC until they are in settled accommodation in Inverclyde.

"Colleagues in our Wellbeing Service and the local housing team are in regular contact with them, checking in several times a week."

Local authority bosses in Lincolnshire say they are hopeful that Inverclyde Council will approve the family's move here soon.

Ms Neal said: "Knowing their circumstances, Lincolnshire County Council have made a further discretionary support payment to the family.

"We do not know why there is a delay at that [Inverclyde] end, but we are in contact with Inverclyde Council in the hope that the family can be settled as soon as possible."

Inverclyde Council said it would be 'inappropriate to comment on an individual's circumstances'.

However, a spokesperson for the council and health and social care partnership said: "We will always support anyone looking to come into the area and our New Scots team remain ready and willing to offer their full support and provide a warm welcome when anyone arrives here.

"There is specific criteria attached to the Scottish Government's super sponsor scheme that we and any prospective private sponsors must follow and checks that must be carried out before anyone can be rehoused.

"We would urge private sponsors to help to make that as smooth as possible by providing all the information that's needed as quickly as possible.

"We are here to provide help and assistance and are happy to do so."

Local MP Ronnie Cowan says he has raised the family's plight with the council.

Mr Cowan said: "Happily, Svetlana and her family are in Scotland and safe from the war being waged by Russia in Ukraine.

"It is really important that sponsors of Ukrainian refugees provide the appropriate standards of accommodation, and local councils have the responsibility to make sure these standards are met.

"Clearly being housed in a hotel near a motorway as a temporary measure must not be allowed to continue and the family needs to put food on the table.

"Inverclyde has shown its true colours in providing a warm welcome for Ukrainian refugees and that must continue.

"As part of that welcome we must provide welfare

standards which meet the needs of families who are, after all, fleeing a brutal war."

Despite the difficulties she is currently in, Svetlana says she is 'grateful' for the help she is receiving and wants to thank people and authorities for their support.

She added: "I want to emphasise that I am grateful to all of the UK and authorities for helping Ukraine and Ukrainians, and I am very glad that Lincolnshire Council heard me and helped with additional money.

"I hope we will solve this misunderstanding very quickly."