

THE FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S INSTITUTES OF NORTHERN IRELAND UKRAINE

We have all been watching in horror the plight of the Ukrainians and are anxious to do something to help them. It is possible for Institutes to do so but what they can do is limited by our Constitution and what we are permitted to do by the Charity Commission.

The big difficulty is that Institutes are only permitted to support **ONE** outside charity in their financial year and that any donations are not just money but goods as well. The Charity Commission says that the charity supported has to have the same objectives as our own, which is not a problem in this case.

So, who can donate?

Any Institute, which has not yet made a contribution to a charity in its current financial year, can fund raise and/or donate goods to an organisation collecting for the Ukraine. This would become its one outside charity.

Who cannot?

Unfortunately, any Institute that has already supported an outside charity in its current financial year.

But

Time can be donated. Members can assist with the collection and sorting of goods for transport, which can be more valuable than money.

And there is nothing to stop individuals from donating.

This is a dire situation for those caught up in a war not of their own making and we urge our Institutes to do what they are best at, looking after others, and rise to the challenge of supplying humanitarian need for Ukraine.

Please read below the attached advice on giving from Charity Commission NI.

March 2022

Advice to the public wishing to donate during the emergency in Ukraine

The crisis in Ukraine has arisen very quickly, with many people and organisations working to offer support to the people of Ukraine, where they can.

Emergencies such as this need to be responded to with urgency, but it is also important that your support, whether that is money, goods or time, is being used as it should be.

Frances McCandless, Charity Commission for Northern Ireland Chief Executive, has urged the public to remember that **the quickest and most effective way to help the Ukrainian people is to contribute via a registered charity.**

She continued: “You should look for a charity that already has a track record of providing the kind of practical supports and assistance that the Ukrainian people, and those who are supporting them, need at this **time. Especially charities which have significant experience of providing assistance to refugees and displaced people, of operating in conflict zones and working with international partners.**”

“The outpouring of support in response to this crisis is typical of the well-known generosity of the people of Northern Ireland, but unfortunately in these situations **there are also people who will try to take advantage of this generosity.** They will use different means to direct funds raised for charitable purposes for their own personal gain. It’s important that funds and goods are given to organisations that can deliver them.”

You can check whether a charity is registered and has this experience by going to the [register of charities](#) on the Commission’s website. If the charity is not listed, you should also check the Commission’s public [combined list](#) which details organisations awaiting contact by the Commission to apply for charity registration.

Charity Commission NI