



Home Affairs Committee

Select Committee Team, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

Tel +44 (0)20 7219 6856 Email homeaffcom@parliament.uk

Website www.parliament.uk/homeaffairscom

From the Committee Chair

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

2 Marsham Street

London

SW1P 4DF

By email only

20 April 2022

Dear Lord Harrington,

I am writing to raise serious concern about delays and disfunction in the operation of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. I have been contacted by many British hosts who, having matched with a Ukrainian family and submitted applications, are still awaiting a response regarding the visas over three-weeks later. The delay and lack of communication is causing significant distress and putting vulnerable women and children in dangerous situations.

In many of the cases reported to me the Ukrainian families awaiting visas are homeless or spending the last of their life savings paying for accommodation. In one case I am aware of, a mother, a 9-year-old girl and an 8-month-old baby have been sleeping rough in a factory whilst awaiting news on their visa applications.

I have also received numerous reports of documentation uploaded into the online application form being lost, or disappearing, in some cases multiple times. It is not clear to the British hosts or the applicants if these applications have been successfully lodged or if they must re-submit all the documentation.

I appreciate the remarks you made on 5 April, acknowledging criticism of the Scheme and committing to take action. However, these problems have clearly not been resolved. In your response to this letter, can you set out:

1. The actions your department is taking to improve communication with applicants and whether regular updates can be provided, in order to reduce distress?

2. Where applications were lodged over 14 days ago, would you consider allocating specific resource to ensure these cases are examined and resolved as a matter of urgency?

4. When do you expect to reach the target of issuing 15,000 visas a week under both schemes?

5. Can you confirm whether there have been multiple data losses regarding applications to the Homes for Ukraine scheme? If not, please immediately issue clear communication that documents disappearing in the online application form does not mean that the documentation and application has in fact been lost.

I have provided details of specific cases which have been brought to my attention on the second page of this letter. If you are able to provide any information in relation to these specific cases I would be very grateful. These cases also illustrate the number of applicants who are waiting for over three weeks with little or no communication about the status of their applications.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diana Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'D' and 'J'.

Dame Diana Johnson MP