



## Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee

**Lord Harrington**  
**Minister for Refugees**  
**Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities**  
**4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Fry Building**  
**2 Marsham Street**  
**London**  
**SW1P 4DF**

4 May 2022

Dear Richard,

### **Support for Ukrainian Refugees: Follow Up**

Thank you for your letter dated 27 April responding to my letter of 19 April. I am grateful for the additional information you have provided but I still have significant concerns relating to support for Ukrainian refugees and for local authorities.

#### Funding

In your letter you explain that no funding is available for local authorities to support Ukrainians arriving through the family scheme because “[t]he Ukraine Family Scheme is similar to existing family visa routes, and provision of public services from this route should be managed in the usual way”. You add that refugees from the family scheme should rely on the UK welfare system for specific needs. The Committee has previously found this to be an unacceptable basis for this policy, since refugees arriving through the Ukraine family scheme are coming to the UK in very different circumstances to existing family visa routes and will require similar support to those arriving through the Homes for Ukraine scheme, such as school places, signposting to local services, community integration, and trauma support. There are local authorities with an existing Ukrainian community which will in all likelihood receive a large number of refugees through the Ukraine Family Scheme. The local authorities will see increased demand for their services, but are being told there is no funding available to cover this. Calls from my Committee and from local government for funding for local authorities for the family scheme have thus far been ignored. **What assessment has been made of the impact of providing funding for the Homes for Ukraine scheme and not the Ukraine family scheme?**



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### Data sharing

Thank you for the update you provided on data sharing with local authorities regarding sponsors. **Can you confirm whether data on arrivals from the family scheme are now being shared with local authorities?** In the absence of any funding for local authorities for the family scheme, it is vital that councils are informed about refugees arriving through the family route so that they can provide appropriate services and allocate resources for this purpose.

You explain that it is not possible to switch between schemes after arrival to the UK and that Ukrainians with family in the UK who are unable to provide accommodation should apply to the Homes for Ukraine scheme and apply before arriving in the UK. My Committee has previously found this to be unacceptable. It should not be incumbent on refugees escaping a warzone to find a sponsor before leaving that warzone simply because their family in the UK does not have suitable accommodation. Nor should a refugee arriving on the family scheme have to register with their council as homeless when residents in the area are willing to offer accommodation. **I strongly urge you to rethink this policy and allow refugees on the family scheme to be matched with a sponsor after arrival in the UK if their family is unable to provide accommodation.** I also urge you to take this into account in the development of later phases of the scheme. This would have the double benefit of not wasting the generosity of those who have offered accommodation and of reducing the number of refugees becoming homeless.

### Matching

Thank you for the update on the pilot matching model, which was deemed too "resource heavy". **I would be grateful if you could provide timescales for the "alternative model" being developed by Reset.**

### Longer-term considerations

You understandably explain that "for now our focus is rightly on supporting arrivals from Ukraine" and that you are therefore not currently looking at wider lessons. My Committee heard from the Local Government Association about the very different experiences of refugees in this country depending on which country they have fled. Given the many challenges that the Ukraine schemes have presented, and the fact that there are still outstanding issues nearly two months on from the launch of the family scheme and six weeks on from the launch of Homes for Ukraine, **I strongly urge you to begin planning for a joined-up approach to welcoming refugees sooner rather than later.**



## **Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee**

Thank you again for your engagement on this important matter. I would be grateful for a reply by Wednesday 11 May.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clive Betts'.

**Clive Betts MP**  
**Chair, Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee**