



Home Office



Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing & Communities

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27th April 2022

Dear Clive,

Thank you for your letter of 19 April. I welcome your queries regarding the support being provided for those fleeing the conflict in Ukraine, and I have provided a response to each of these below.

### **Funding**

Could you outline the difference in support for refugees you envisage local authorities provide on each scheme and why there is currently no funding for the family scheme? Are community integration and homelessness assistance not considered a responsibility for local authorities supporting refugees under the family scheme?

Both the Ukraine Family Scheme and the Homes for Ukraine Scheme are free and uncapped routes for individuals to come to the UK, which grant three years' permission to live here. The 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.

Homes for Ukraine on the other hand is a unique scheme that has been set up specifically to support those escaping the conflict in Ukraine. The government is providing additional funding to local authorities which includes resource to enable them to carry out sponsorship-specific functions such as safeguarding checks and property checks, administering payments, as well as providing support such as English language training to help their integration into communities.

What provisions are in place to ensure refugees from the family scheme receive adequate accommodation and support, should family members not have the means to support their relatives?

Arrivals have full entitlement to work and access benefits under both schemes. The UK has a welfare system which is designed to help those who face financial hardship, or who have specific needs, which includes all arrivals from Ukraine.

## Data sharing

What type of data about sponsors can councils obtain and is this accessible to councils now? The latest guidance states councils will be given access to live data for expected arrivals - how will councils obtain this data and when?

Sponsor and accommodation offers from Homes for Ukraine Visa Applications have been provided by the Home Office and been made available since March. This data is shared with local authorities in England and with the Devolved Administrations via the Foundry tool, is updated daily, and includes the sponsor's contact details, address and the guest's visa status.

As of last week, Expression of interest (EOI) data is also available via Foundry so that they can see information about people in their area who are interested in becoming sponsors. This allows councils to: compare the personal information of potential sponsors with other safeguarding data sources; identify people who may be unsuitable to become sponsors; as well as in due course to identify potential sponsors for re-matching in the event of sponsorship breakdown.

This data has been supplemented with data on visa approvals and arrivals via the Home Office on the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, which has been available for the past two weeks.

The family scheme is open to Ukrainians with family members in the UK, however these family members have no obligation to provide housing. Are there plans to match refugees whose families do not have suitable accommodation with sponsors from the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme? If not, why not?

It is currently not possible to switch between schemes after arrival into the UK. Ukrainians with family in the UK are welcome to apply for the Homes for Ukraine scheme but must do so before arriving in the UK.

## Matching

When will the later phases of the scheme launch and how will they work? What will the role of organisations as sponsors be?

Charities, businesses and faith and community groups have an important role to play connecting individuals who wish to sponsor and wish to be sponsored, and of course providing an excellent welcome to individuals arriving to the UK. Many are already doing so or have an appetite to do more. We are working with them to develop the scheme incrementally over the next six weeks. We will be publishing guidance and information on gov.uk shortly.

Your letter described a funded pilot for a digital matching tool taking place over the past fortnight. What was the outcome of this pilot? What are the Government's next steps?

The pilot tested a matching model based on building relationships with both sponsors and beneficiaries. While this approach was seen as too resource heavy,

Reset are using the findings from the pilot to develop an alternative model, with a focus on training potential sponsors to ensure long lasting matches are made.

We know that there are excellent services out there already that carry out robust matching; we are therefore also working with a range of other partners on potential services as we design the next phase of the scheme, including production of guidance. Our vision is to enable a range of civil society models to flourish, building on existing innovation whilst providing scope to improve quality.

### **Longer term considerations**

What plans is the Government making for how Ukrainian refugees transition after their stay in their sponsors' accommodation comes to an end?

Sponsors are committed to hosting guests for a minimum of six months, but can continue beyond the initial six months if desired by both the sponsor and the guest. All those from Ukraine coming to the country under the scheme will be able to seek and take up employment, and will have access to public funds. After leaving their sponsor's accommodation, guests will be able to rent a property. Guests will be able to claim the housing part of Universal Credit or Housing Benefit if needed, and are eligible for social housing and statutory homelessness assistance.

What consideration is being given to community cohesion in areas that may end up with significant Ukrainian and Russian populations? Or areas with significant populations of Ukrainian and Afghan refugees, who may have had very different experiences of being a refugee in this country?

In addition to the support and practical advice on the local area that sponsors will be able to provide guests, councils will play a key role in supporting the integration of Ukrainian families into their local communities. This will be particularly important in areas of the country that might not have strong links with the Ukrainian diaspora.

Integration support might include the organisation of community events, the use of community champions and interfaith networks, increasing council contact / interaction with Ukrainians, access to translation services and working with local voluntary sector organisations and faith groups to help signpost advice and support.

What plans are being considered to design a joined-up approach to offering a home to a refugee? Has consideration been given to expand the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme, or create a similar scheme, for sponsors to offer accommodation to other refugees currently in temporary accommodation?

We will in due course consider what wider lessons can be drawn or whether alternate schemes could be developed, but for now our focus is rightly on supporting arrivals from Ukraine.

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I hope this response has provided additional clarity and reassurance on these important issues. As you highlighted in your letter, we are continually reviewing and updating our guidance products for councils, sponsors, and guests.

**With all my very best wishes,**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Lord Harrington  
Minister for Refugees**