

Clive Betts MP
Chair, Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

4 May 2022

Dear Clive,

Re: Support for Ukrainian refugees

Thank you for your response to my letter to the Committee expanding on some of the issues explored in my session on 25 March.

On your first point on the progress on the data councils are receiving, I can confirm that councils now have access to the sponsors, matches and other relevant data on the Homes for Ukraine scheme for their area using the [online Foundry system](#). The Foundry system allows councils to record the results of checks carried out in relation to the scheme, such as accommodation and DBS checks with further system improvements to enable councils to log concerns and amend information expected shortly. DLUHC is also hosting [weekly sessions](#) for users of the Foundry system which provide opportunities to walk through the system and ask any questions about the system or the data held within it. Whilst we welcome the recognition of the importance of data improvement, the regular updates by their providers of the data has a capacity impact on councils in terms of the need to keep up to speed with developments within already stretched resources.

Expression of Interest (EOI) data has also been made available for councils within the system, with ongoing improvements to its quality. This could allow for planned rematching in the event of a sponsorship arrangement breakdown or when sponsorships end. The data available needs to be matched by policy developments and we remain keen to work with government on a clear rematching process across all the routes to the UK.

Whilst data quality has significantly improved, councils are continuing to experience the following issues. We are continuing to press DLUHC so that councils are able to access the data that they need in the format that is useful to them:

- Data is arriving too slowly.
- There is missing data across a number of fields.
- The extraction/exporting of the data into excel often misses key lines of data which has to be manually added.
- Contact details are not always correct, and one council is reporting that the date of arrival has not been correct on any case to date.
- Numbers are inconsistent and change, so council teams are having to check twice a day for accuracy.
- It does not contain information on the property offered, for instance, if it is a room, the number of rooms, or if it is a flat or house.
- Data does not provide dates for when visas were obtained or the arrival date into the UK

- There are major gaps in the data as well as duplication. Multiple records of the same people is a recurring issue.
- Councils only have the sponsor details and not the names of other adults over 16 who need a DBS check.
- The data is currently not downloadable. It would be helpful if the data could be downloaded by the local authority.
- Some local authorities are reporting they are unable to gain access to the portal at all.
- The viewing panel on the data is unhelpful and requires a council to go into each line rather than an at a glance view.
- Guidance documents do not cover all key functions such as exporting and inputting of data such as property inspections. There is concern about infringing on data sharing agreements as the current data sharing system would provide access to all data at a county level if a district is given access. County councils are nervous about data sharing agreement issues if, for example, a district council has access rights and can then see data for the county and other districts locally. Linked to this is the ability or lack thereof, of sharing data with other agencies that might be providing support. We understand DLUHC is looking at permissions schema and guidance, and will report back to us as soon as possible.

On your second question, we have not had confirmation from the Government that people arriving through the Ukraine Family Scheme can be matched with a Homes for Ukraine sponsor to avoid becoming homeless. Clarity on this remains a priority for councils.

As I noted in the session, councils are providing accommodation for a number of homeless families who have arrived via the Ukraine Family Scheme visa route, despite there being no funding support for this from the government. That is why, as I mentioned in my previous letter, it is vital that councils receive funding for both schemes to support their crucial role in providing accommodation for homeless families, as well as ensuring integration and access to local services. Councils also still do not have access to data on those arriving under the Family scheme.

Councils continue to see new requests for homelessness support from Ukrainian households via all routes. The LGA has not undertaken a further survey of councils, however DLUHC are now collecting their own data from councils. As I understand it this data is not currently publicly available.

I hope this additional information is helpful, and as always please do not hesitate to get in touch with Laura Johnson if you have further queries.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr James Jamieson
Chairman, Local Government Association