



**Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities**

Felicity Buchan MP

Minister for Housing and Homelessness

**Department for Levelling Up, Housing and
Communities**

2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Clive Betts MP as Chair of LUHC SC
Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Committee
House of Commons
London
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SW1P 3JA

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20th December 2022

Dear Clive,

Thank you for your email of 13 October 2022 about the Ukraine Family Scheme and Homes for Ukraine to the former Minister for Housing and Communities, the Rt Hon Andrew Stephenson MP. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area. I would like to offer my sincere apologies for the delayed response.

Under the Ukraine Family Scheme family members of Ukrainians already in the UK with settled status are able to come to the UK and work, study, claim benefits and access public services for up to three years. The scheme was set up as a temporary alternative to the existing family routes which existed before the Ukraine conflict, where public services are funded out of council budgets and the same principle is applied here. Given the situation in Ukraine, eligibility was expanded beyond immediate family and the normal proof of minimum income was waived. The scheme is open to people overseas and those already in the UK, should they qualify.

Homes for Ukraine is a unique scheme that has been set up specifically to support those escaping the conflict in Ukraine who are not able to rely on family support. The Government's priority was to get Ukrainians to safety as quickly as possible. As it was designed to help people fleeing conflict in Ukraine it is not open to people already in the UK.

Under the Ukraine Family Scheme there has always been an assumption that arrivals will be supported by their family members in the UK and will benefit from the wider integration advantages in joining an existing family network, although I do recognise that has not happened in the case you describe. As such, the Government did not extend the £350 per month 'thank you' payment offered to those who are willing to offer a home to refugees arriving in the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

The case you describe is unusual and, in this situation, the sponsor and/or the Ukrainian guests should contact their local council who are best placed to understand support needed by local communities. Local councils have a responsibility to support Ukrainians who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and have discretion on how they use their funding to achieve this.

The Department will provide £150million of new UK-wide funding in the 2023/24 financial year to local authorities and devolved governments to help support Ukrainian guests move into their own homes and reduce the risk of homelessness.

I do understand the difficulties faced by the sponsors you describe who have generously opened their home to help.

We continually review immigration policy and schemes to ensure they deliver the intended aims and are exploring all options for supporting Ukrainians fleeing conflict in Ukraine, including providing suitable accommodation for those impacted. As part of this process, we will be engaging with local government, Devolved Administrations, and voluntary and charity stakeholders in the new year to inform our decision making.

I trust this information is helpful and I thank you for writing on this important matter.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'Felicity Buchan'. The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name 'Felicity' and the surname 'Buchan' clearly legible.

Felicity Buchan MP
Minister for Housing and Homelessness