



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

Felicity Buchan MP

Minister for Housing and Homelessness

***Department for Levelling Up, Housing and
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Our reference: 23441604

Clive Betts MP
Chair, Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Committee
House of Commons
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23 December 2023

Dear Clive,

Thank you for your letter dated 20 December 2022 where you outlined concerns about access to the private rental sector and potential homelessness for Ukrainian families this winter. The Prime Minister answered some of your questions during the House of Commons Liaison Committee on 20 December 2022, but I have provided a detailed response below.

You asked whether the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) is expecting a spike in Ukrainian families presenting as homeless this Christmas.

We have taken swift action to establish routes for those fleeing Russia's invasion and are now providing further support to hosts and guests in communities across the UK. These actions should minimise the small number of cases where families present as homeless, encouraging those who have shown such generosity to continue the scheme, and enabling local authorities and devolved governments to swiftly meet their duty to help mitigate homelessness.

It is inherent in the design of this kind of philanthropic scheme that a proportion of sponsorships would come to an end due to changing circumstances and our figures show only a fraction of Ukrainian arrivals have had a homelessness duty accepted.

We are monitoring the levels of Ukrainian households who are owed homelessness duties and are in temporary accommodation. We know that as of 18 November, local authorities in England have accepted homelessness duties to 2,985 Ukrainian households, at which time 670 Ukrainian households were in temporary accommodation. We regularly publish this information on gov.uk.

You also asked what the Department is doing in the immediate term to prevent Ukrainian families finding themselves homeless this winter.

Since the Homes for Ukraine scheme launched in March 2022, the UK Government has provided £1.1 billion to councils through a tariff for each arrival in their area. We have enabled rematching, whereby a Ukrainian guest can find a new sponsor after their initial six months and are working with partners to encourage more sponsors to step forward to assist those needing a new place to live.

On 14 December we announced further measures to protect the Homes for Ukraine scheme and ensure its sustainability into its second year, including increasing the duration and value

of thank you payments, and providing new funding to mitigate homelessness and relieve housing pressures.

The £350 'thank you' payments, originally in place for twelve months, will be extended to a maximum duration of two years. The Government will also increase the minimum 'thank you' payments for hosts from £350 per month to £500 per month, once a guest has been here in the UK for 12 months.

From 1 January 2023, councils will receive funding of £5,900 for each new arrival to support guests and their sponsors (although 'thank you' payments will be accounted separately).

We have also provided councils with £366 million for this year (2022/23) to help prevent and meet the costs of homelessness, which includes an additional £50m top-up announced in December 2022, to support local authorities to help prevent vulnerable households from becoming homeless this winter.

We have launched a £500 million Local Authority Housing Fund, which will provide capital funding directly to English councils in areas that are facing the most significant housing pressures as a result of Ukrainian arrivals. This fund will allow them to address the immediate pressures as well as build a sustainable stock of affordable housing for the future. The fund is expected to provide up to 4,000 homes by 2024, reducing the impact of new arrivals on existing housing pressures and eventually providing a new and permanent supply of accommodation for local communities.

DLUHC fully recognises the many pressures on local authority budgets and at the Autumn Statement we announced a further £6.5 billion to be made available for local government to deliver core services over the next two years.

Barriers to accessing the Private Rented Sector

Officials are working with representatives from the National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA) on the issues that guests from Ukraine may face when accessing the PRS. We are continuing to use this feedback to consider appropriate guidance and our future policy for accommodating Ukrainians.

We are also engaging the NRLA to understand how we can encourage landlords to consider renting to Ukrainian guests and other refugee cohorts. In some instances, councils are responding by acting as a guarantor for the household, and some councils are using their tariff funding to support guests to access the private housing through deposits/rent advances.

Government is providing £150 million 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.

Local councils have a duty to ensure Ukrainian families are not left homeless and we are supporting them to meet this requirement.

Thank you for writing to me about these important matters.

Yours,



FELICITY BUCHAN MP
Minister for Housing and Homelessness



BARONESS SCOTT OF BYBROOK OBE
Minister for Faith and Communities