



Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

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Lord Harrington
Minister for Refugees
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22 March 2022

Dear Richard

Support for Ukrainian refugees

You will remember that during the Home Affairs Committee's evidence session with yourself, Kevin Foster MP and officials on Wednesday, on the domestic response to Ukraine, I commented that there would be some issues that would need to be followed up. We have also taken account of the letter from Jeremy Pocklington, Permanent Secretary, DLUHC, received on 18 March.

You will be aware that my Committee has invited you to give evidence before the Easter recess, and we will explore the Government's support further then. Before that session it would be helpful if you could provide a response to the following questions:

- 1) We have heard from local authorities that they are expecting further guidance and support from central government. This is after the first refugees have now arrived in the UK. Can you clarify what further support will be given to local authorities? Can you also describe how central government is coordinating the messaging to and consistent implementation of the scheme by local authorities? Are the Government going to set up a central point of contact for Local Authorities?
- 2) Are the Government going to set up a central point of contact for MPs? Will an MP hotline be established? Will MPs receive a letter or other written information on how they can advise their constituents and local authorities?
- 3) The payment of £10,500 per person to councils is guaranteed for one year only. What steps will be taken to adjust the underlying funding of councils for 2022-23 and beyond to reflect the additional demands on budgets beyond the initial costs of additional provision?
- 4) How will the £350 per household payment made under the 'Homes for Ukraine' policy be made and at what point of each month will it be paid?

- 5) Can the Committee be sent the Department's analysis of the ways in which households that accept Ukrainian families and individuals will be guaranteed that rules and regulations potentially leading to unintended consequences for benefit payments, mortgages, insurance, leasehold restrictions and so on are to be dealt with?
- 6) Where Ukrainian refugees are housed in a separate housing unit (e.g. a self-contained flat) will normal tenancy rules apply or not?
- 7) What guidance will be given to councils about Disclosure and Barring Service checks, safeguarding and other care issues in relation to Ukrainians being housed in private homes? How long will councils have to complete such checks?
- 8) What steps are being taken to arrange data sharing access between agencies in respect of both refugees and hosts?
- 9) What arrangements have the Department made to match refugees with potential hosts?
- 10) What particular steps are to be taken to handle unaccompanied children arriving from Ukraine?
- 11) Are steps being taken to speed up the processing of payments for Universal Credit and other benefits where newly arrived families qualify?
- 12) Where costs for an individual are significantly in excess of £10,500 in 2021-22 (e.g. for a child who qualifies for special educational needs support or where nursery costs are high) will councils be able to bid for discretionary extra support?
- 13) Where families and individuals housed under the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme feel it is no longer appropriate for them to live at their original UK home how will they be guided to another one?
- 14) Does the Department have an analysis of the location of spare school places and how this is likely to match up with the location of Ukrainian families settling?
- 15) Will local authorities be provided with access to capital finance where extra facilities are necessary? For example where temporary additional classrooms are required?
- 16) Will councils be given additional funds to help accommodate households which become overcrowded as the result of their having accepted 'Homes for Ukraine' families?
- 17) How many Afghan refugees are still housed in hotels and other temporary accommodation?
- 18) What technical equipment (e.g. phones, laptops) can be provided to refugees and how will it be provided? This was found to be an urgent need for Afghan refugees when they arrived in the UK.
- 19) What discussions have taken place with banks to provide for the fast tracking of bank account applications for arriving refugees?

Thank you for all your help on this matter. I realise the Department must be very busy in handling the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme, but feel it is right that the Committee helps provide transparency and accountability for the Government's emergency response.

We would welcome a response to these questions by 28 March.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clive Betts', written in a cursive style.

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