

EXECUTIVE

14th July 2022

Report Title	Homes for Ukraine Programme
Report Author	David Watts, Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing
Lead Member	Cllr Helen Harrison, Executive Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing

Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	Not Applicable

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Homes for Ukraine Relationship Case Study

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To seek approval from the Executive for the proposed use of the Government's Homes for Ukraine Local Authority Funding to support families to rebuild their lives and to integrate into communities in North Northamptonshire.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The Homes for Ukraine Scheme was launched on 14th March 2022 by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. North Northamptonshire Council is responsible for a number of functions to support the scheme.
- 2.2. The Council is responsible for the initial sponsor and housing checks, including at least one in person visit, payments to sponsors, safeguarding checks, including a DBS check, ongoing support, school places, and information about the local area. Following the guest(s) arrival, the Council should confirm as

soon as possible that the guest is well and that there are no welfare concerns or needs for care and support and ensure the provision of appropriate wraparound support services to aid integration.

- 2.3. The government is providing funding of £10,500 per person to councils to support Ukrainian families to rebuild their lives and fully integrate into communities. In addition, the government are also providing additional ring-fenced funding for the 'thank you' payments of £350 per sponsoring household per month.
- 2.4. The Executive is asked to support the proposals for how the Local Authority Funding is used to support both sponsors and guests under the Homes for Ukraine scheme in North Northamptonshire.
- 2.5. The Executive is asked to note that in addition to the Homes for Ukraine programme, the outcome of the Asylum Dispersal consultation currently underway could potentially impact all local authorities in becoming an asylum dispersal area and therefore having to provide support to asylum seekers, as well as the ongoing Afghan Resettlement Programme and the Ukraine programmes.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended that the Executive:
 - a. Approves the approach to funding as set out at paragraph 5.8 (Table One) of the report
 - b. Notes that the use of the funding will ensure that the Council meets the obligations set out by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to ensure adequate safeguarding and support is provided to sponsoring households and Ukrainian guests to enable the successful integration of Ukrainian refugees in North Northamptonshire.
 - c. Delegates authority to the Executive Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing, in liaison with the Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing, to take any further decisions and/or actions required to appropriately support both refugees and sponsors in North Northamptonshire.
- 3.2. By approving these recommendations, Council Officers will be able to:
 - Set a clear approach for how the Local Authority funding will be effectively used to support and help the integration of Ukrainian Refugees into their local communities.
- 3.3 Alternative Options considered:

- The alternative is not to set out a clear approach for how the Tariff will be applied in North Northamptonshire.

4. Report Background

- 4.1. The Homes for Ukraine Scheme was launched on 14th March 2022 by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. There are currently two government schemes supporting Ukrainian Refugees to enter the UK:

Definitions:

“Sponsor” or “sponsors” refers to an individual, group or organisation who has been approved to accommodate an individual or household from Ukraine under the “Homes for Ukraine” sponsorship scheme.

“Guest” or “guests” refers to an individual or household previously resident in Ukraine, prior to 1st January 2022, who have secured a visa under the “Homes for Ukraine” scheme, which enables them to be housed by a sponsor.

4.1.1. Ukraine Family Scheme

4.1.1.1. The Ukraine Family Scheme allows immediate and extended family members of British nationals, people settled in the UK, and certain others resident here, to come to the country. Those granted under the scheme will be granted a visa that lasts three years, giving them certainty and ensuring their future in the country. The scheme is free and does not include any salary or language requirements.

4.1.1.2. UK Family members who are welcoming extended family into their homes are expected to support them in accessing benefits, school admissions and health services, for example, and we as a local authority are not required to provide support. The Council is not funded to do so, however, as a Council, we do have a statutory homeless duty should they present as being homeless, for example, family breakdowns.

4.1.2. Homes for Ukraine

4.1.2.1. Homes for Ukraine is a sponsorship scheme that allows people and organisations in the UK to offer Ukrainians fleeing the war a home. This scheme lets individuals, charities, community groups and businesses offer a route to safety for Ukrainians, even if they have no ties to the UK. Previously only Ukrainians with family already settled in the UK could come.

4.1.2.2. The scheme is open to Ukrainian nationals who were residents in Ukraine prior to 1st January 2022 and also to their immediate family members (for example spouse/partner and

children under 18) who may be of other nationalities, to be sponsored to come to the UK. Applicants can apply from Ukraine or from any other third country.

4.1.2.3. Children under the age of 18 must be applying as part of a family unit which includes their parent or legal guardian to be eligible for the scheme. That family unit must stay together in the same sponsor accommodation. Children who are currently outside of the UK can use the scheme to reunite with their parent or legal guardian who is currently living in the UK, if they are the child's sponsor.

4.1.2.4. Currently, unaccompanied children who are under 18 are not allowed to be sponsored by, or reside with, unrelated sponsors, unless they are their legal guardian.

4.1.2.5. The government have recently announced a change in policy and are now allowing unaccompanied children under 18 to travel to the UK under this scheme. There is an expectation that they will be sponsored by a known relative, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Further detailed guidance on this will be published in early July.

4.1.2.6. Guests will be able to live and work in the UK for up to 3 years and access benefits, healthcare, employment, and other support. Those arriving need to meet standard security checks prior to being issued with a visa.

4.2. The responsibilities of the Council under the Homes for Ukraine scheme include:

- Accommodation checks to ensure the safety and security of adults and children entering a sponsor's home;
- Safeguarding checks, including Enhanced DBS checks for any sponsor household members over the age of 16yrs where children and/or vulnerable adults will be living;
- Management of the interim payment for guests, of £200 per guest which is factored into the government funding, and at the discretion of the Council additional payments can be made;
- Management of the monthly 'thank you' payments for the sponsor (set payment regardless of the number guests living in the property);
- Rematching of host and guest, should either:
 - a. The property or situation is not viable or safe for the Ukrainian guest(s) to stay there; or
 - b. The DBS or accommodation checks fail.

- Providing wrap around support for guests and sponsors, to support accessing universal credit, education provision, health services, community integration and homelessness assistance.
- 4.3. In addition to the responsibilities outlined in 4.2 and further to the government's announcement regarding unaccompanied children, the Council will also need to ensure:
- The sponsor is known to the family of the unaccompanied child(ren);
 - Parental consent has been provided and to be verified by the local authority;
 - All DBS and safeguarding checks are completed, along with the initial home visit before a visa is issued; and
 - At the home visit, the expectations and responsibilities for the unaccompanied child(ren) are discussed with the sponsor.
- 4.4. The guidance for unaccompanied children is being drawn from Private Fostering.
- 4.5. Any unaccompanied child arriving in the UK do not fall under UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children), and therefore are not counted as part of the 0.07% threshold¹.
- 4.6. Under this scheme, including unaccompanied children, funding has been made available from the government:
- Funding at a rate of £10,500 per guest to councils to enable them to provide support to families to rebuild their lives and fully integrate into communities. The £10,500 for Ukrainian nationals is for the first year. The government will review funding for future years in due course; and
 - As a Council, we are responsible for administering the 'thank you' payments at the £350 per sponsoring household per month. The government are allocating additional funding for these payments, but they do expect councils to cover administration costs within the tariff.
- 4.7. The government is also supplying more funding to councils to provide education services for children from families arriving from Ukraine under this scheme. The Department for Education will distribute funding on a per pupil basis for the three phases of education at the following annual rates:
- Early years (ages 2 to 4) - £3,000
 - Primary (ages 5 -11) - £6,580

¹ There is an expectation by government that local authorities will have UASC of 0.07% of their general child population.

- Secondary (ages 11-18) - £8,755
 - These tariffs include support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- 4.8. A separate budget code has been established to monitor spend against the funding, which will be overseen by the Assistant Director for Housing and Communities.
- 4.9. The Council has also initiated conversations with voluntary sector partners to discuss their role in being able to support the programme and have already been involved in a number of support networks, such as Irthlingborough Library and the Hope Church, Corby.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1. The use of the funding provided by DLUHC for the Homes for Ukraine scheme in North Northamptonshire is important to the Council and those Ukrainian Refugees looking to settle in this area of Northamptonshire to support:
- integration into the local community;
 - access to local services, including healthcare and education;
 - successful sponsorship; and
 - the mitigation of other risks and potential costs such as temporary accommodation.
- 5.2. There may be some cases where the sponsor/guest relationship breaks down and the guest is homeless or at risk of homelessness, in this instance the Councils' statutory homelessness duties would apply.
- 5.3. Through the work of the Council's Resettlement Officers, they may be able to end a homelessness prevention or relief duty owed to a Ukrainian beneficiary by facilitating a rematch, provided the placement and accommodation are suitable and there is a reasonable prospect of it continuing to be available for at least six months.
- 5.4. The Council must continue to consider their statutory homelessness duties in full and take account of the individual circumstances of each household when assessing if the accommodation and match is suitable. Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) intends to provide more detail on this interaction shortly in an update to the Homelessness Code of Guidance, as well as consequences for intentional homelessness decisions.
- 5.5. Homelessness legislation in respect of local connection is unchanged. However, to support councils in determining which authority should provide assistance in cases where the household is yet to establish a local connection, the recommended general approach should be for the council where the household's sponsor is located to take the homelessness application.
- 5.6. If the household makes a homelessness application to a council other than the council where their sponsor is located, in line with the legislation the council

must take the application and then consider if a local connection referral is appropriate.

- 5.7. It is proposed that the Council develop and recruit to create a dedicated Refugee Resettlement Team, to provide wraparound support and technical guidance associated with refugee status, but to also provide employment, tenancy and immigration support.
- 5.8. The Refugee Resettlement Team would initially be for a fixed term period of three years with Table 1 outlining the key functions.

Table 1: Functions of Refugee Resettlement Team

Key Function	
To deliver an effective refugee resettlement service.	
To provide effective integration and orientation support to families either resettled on resettlement and relocation schemes across North Northamptonshire or short term refugee support programmes.	
To provide a range of specialist housing support to meet the needs of families resettling in North Northamptonshire through the refugee resettlement schemes.	
To provide effective business support and financial administration support to the refugee resettlement and relocation programme across North Northamptonshire.	
To be responsible for data collection, analytics and management from the government portal to ensure effective recording and reporting on refugee status.	
To provide effective administration support to the refugee resettlement and relocation programme across North Northamptonshire.	
To build strong partnerships with communities, agencies and services and empower communities to identify and stimulate community responses to local issues with a particular emphasis on refugee resettlement.	
To provide face-to-face interpretation services to support effective communication.	
<div> <div>Total Salary Costs pa (including on-costs²)</div> <div>£368,730</div> </div>	

- 5.9. A team structure is being developed to incorporate the Refugee Resettlement Team into Communities & Wellbeing service, Housing & Communities Directorate.
- 5.10. The Refugee Resettlement Team will provide support to the Ukrainian guests that includes:

² Based on 33%

- supporting guests with temporary accommodation or the homeless process should the relationship breakdown between guest and sponsor, before a rematch can be undertaken or should the homeless duties have to be initiated;
 - should the guest decide to look to become self-sufficient, robust tenancy support will be essential to ensure successful housing resettlement, long-term tenancy sustainment and the mitigation of other risks and potential costs such as rent arrears;
 - supporting guests and sponsors with welfare and potential safeguarding issues;
 - technical guidance associated with refugee status, but to also provide employment, tenancy and immigration support.
 - effective 'back office' support to ensure timely payments are made to guests and sponsors, and government returns are completed to ensure funding is made available to the Council;
 - helping the families relocated here, settle into their new community, such as supporting them to access health services, schooling for any children, interpretation, training and employment; and
 - developing a comprehensive programme of wraparound support, such as community hubs through library networks, voluntary sector engagement, holiday activities and workshops.
- 5.11. With the level of work involved in managing and delivering the day-to-day operational activities, which includes welfare checks, emergency payments and the time-consuming work involved in relationship breakdowns are at full capacity.
- 5.12. The intensity, volume of work and re-deployment of officers within the Communities and Wellbeing Team, has meant key projects, such as the Community Strategy and other 'Day 2' project work has been delayed.
- 5.13. Without a clear and agreed approach to how the funding is allocated, there is a risk that the funding could be allocated ad hoc and without appropriate management and monitoring.
- 5.14. There is the risk that without the appropriate data management, the Council may not receive the funding allocation, such as the 'thank you' payment contributions.
- 5.15. Additionally, there is the risk that without the appropriate support in place Ukrainian refugees may lose their accommodation via their sponsor, be unable to access benefits and/or employment and experience health issues. The introduction of this methodology allows for a consistent structured and

supportive approach to Ukrainian citizens across North Northamptonshire over the next three years.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. If the Executive agrees to the recommendations of this report, the next stages will be to implement the proposals as per the following indicative timetable:

Action:	Indicative Timings:
Continue with casework, initial and welfare checks; development of wraparound support, for sponsors and guests; management of relationship breakdowns and any safeguarding issues.	Ongoing
Recruitment of temporary agency staff for immediate starts to deal with the current caseload	By end of July 2022
Submit the Recruitment Business Case for the Refugee Resettlement Team	By end of July 2022
Undertake the recruitment process for roles to develop the Resettlement Team	By end of September 2022
Officers in post (taking to account potential notice periods)	By end of November 2022
Ongoing refugee resettlement support and management of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, including community development and integration support.	
Incorporate the Afghan Refugee Resettlement and potential the Asylum Dispersal programmes.	

- 6.2. The timetable is considered to be realistic given that this timeline allows for the recruitment and development of the Refugee Resettlement Team.

- 6.3. The timetable also allows the opportunity to increase the scope of support for refugees through meaningful engagement can be had with VCSE organisations and community groups.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1. Funding at a rate of £10,500 per guest for the first year to councils to enable them to provide support to families to rebuild their lives and fully integrate into communities. The government will review funding for future years in due course.
- 7.1.2. As a Council, we are responsible for administering the 'thank you' payments at the £350 per sponsoring household per month. The government are allocating additional funding for these payments, but they expect councils to cover administration costs within the funding.
- 7.1.3. Table 2 provides an example of the government funding, using the Homes for Ukraine data as at 24th June 2022.

Table 2: Estimated government funding based on current data available.

	Amount	Number as at 24 June	Amount Paid	DLUHC Funding
Sponsor Thank You Payments*	£350	143	£50,050	£50,050
Guests (arrived)	£10,500	310	-	£3,255,000
Guests (due to arrive)	£10,500	148	-	£1,554,000
TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING				£4,859,500

*Per household per month

- 7.1.4. Table 3 provides a financial model required to fund the resettlement programme, focusing on the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.
- 7.1.5. The projections demonstrate that if this approach is adopted the Council can meet the costs of Resettlement from within the Funding allocated.

Table 3: Estimated funding requirements from the funding allocation for Refugee Resettlement Support

	Costs	Number as at 24 June	Amount Paid as at 24 June	Forecast	Comments
Guest Emergency Payments	£200	281	£56,200		Costs covered through the £10,500 grant

	Costs	Number as at 24 June	Amount Paid as at 24 June	Forecast	Comments
Guest Emergency Payment Administration	£1.50 per transaction	143	£1,565		Includes set up fees (initially using HUGGG)
	£250 set up costs		£250		One Off Payment for 22/23 (Transfer to using Post Office PayOut Scheme)
Staffing (inc. on-costs at 33%)				£368,730	As per Table 1
Safeguarding Checks	DBS	£25 per check	340	£8,500	
	Children			£15,000	Charges from NCT for children safeguarding checks & any deep dives as required
Summer Holiday Activities				£11,000	Room hire Staffing
Temporary Accommodation				£20,800	Relationship breakdowns Food parcels Transport TA Starter Packs
TOTAL			£58,015	£424,030	

7.2. Legal

7.2.1. There are no legal implications arising from the proposals.

7.3. Risk

7.3.1. There is the initial risk that the funding would be inconsistently applied by Officers, which could potentially affect the reputation of the Council.

7.3.2. The risk associated with the current workload which may lead to officers being absent or resign due to stress.

7.3.3. There is the additional reputation risk to the Council, should the support the resettle of Ukrainian refugees are not met.

7.3.4. By having this methodology in place, it allows funding to be evenly distributed in supporting the resettlement of Ukrainian Refugees and sufficient capacity in the team to provide a full wraparound service.

7.3.5. There is a risk associated with the inability to recruit to the posts within the Resettlement Team.

7.3.6. Through a robust recruitment process, such as appropriate advertising, and market salaries for the posts, to attract and retain skilled and knowledgeable officers.

7.4. Consultation

7.4.1. Consultation has been undertaken with some key partners to inform this recommendation:

- Local Authority Networks on Refugee Resettlement
- Regional Migration Partnership

7.5. Consideration by Scrutiny

7.5.1. Not applicable for this report although the work undertaken could be part of the scrutiny work programme.

7.6. Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

7.6.1. This report will be considered by the EAP Health & Wellbeing and Vulnerable People and the comments received will be incorporated.

7.7. Climate Impact

7.7.1. Officers will seek to encourage VCSE organisations, sponsors and guests to consider the environmental and climate impact in line with the Council's priorities in this area.

7.8. Community Impact

7.8.1. The objectives of this approach are to ensure that the funding will provide support to those refugees looking to settle in this area of Northamptonshire to:

- integrate into the local community;
- have access to local services, including healthcare and education;
- and
- be able to contribute to the local community.

8. Background Papers

8.1. DLUC Homes for Ukraine: guidance for councils
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-guidance-for-councils#role-of-councils>