



Northumberland

County Council

CABINET

DATE: 12TH JULY 2022

HOMES FOR UKRAINE – FINANCIAL REPORT

REPORT OF Philip Soderquest, Service Director, Housing and Public Protection

CABINET MEMBER: Councillor Colin Horncastle, Portfolio Holder for Community Services

Purpose of report

The report provides an overview for Cabinet of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, and requests approval to spend in advance of payment being received from Government to support the delivery of the required Local Authority commitments.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- Cabinet approves the request to spend in advance of receipt of the grant funding
- Cabinet approves the request to spend up to the value of the grant funding which will be received
- Cabinet agrees the completion of enhanced DBS checks be for all hosts and their family members over the age of 16, and the costs associated with doing so.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the 'Living, Learning' priority included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2021-2024 which states:

We will care for our residents, support the most vulnerable in our society and help people to live healthy lives.

Key Issues

1. The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Michael Gove, launched the Homes for Ukraine Scheme on the 14th March, ahead of Phase One of the scheme, which opened for visa applications on the 18th of March.
2. The government is providing funding at a rate of £10,500 per person to councils to enable them to provide support to individuals and families arriving from Ukraine to rebuild their lives and fully integrate into communities. This commitment is for the first year only; they will review funding for future years in due course.
3. The funding is un-ringfenced, with a number of conditions attached, and will match the tariff offered under the first year of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP), although the role of councils will be different. For example, councils are not asked to source initial accommodation under this scheme as this will be provided by the sponsor / host.
4. Government expects councils to use the tariff to meet all of their associated costs (both for providing council services and for administering payments).
5. Payment of this grant is conditional on councils undertaking necessary safeguarding checks and providing the Government with relevant data. DLUHC will use completed data extracted from Foundry (the DLUHC information portal) to support grant payments, and to provide assurance that relevant grant conditions have been met.
6. Government has indicated that payment of the grant will be three months in arrears, with first payments, expected in June, still to be received. The guidance states that any surplus tariff has to be repaid back to DLUHC and we will need to make quarterly return signed by S151 Officer. **To date no payments have been received from Government**
7. In addition, the government is also providing additional funding directly to schools to provide education services for children from families arriving from Ukraine under this scheme. The Department for Education (DfE) will allocate 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
- Secondary (ages 11-18) - £8,755

These tariffs include support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

8. The council is required to administer the following:
 - **£200.00** per person upon arrival from Ukraine to meet subsistence costs
 - DBS checks for Hosts and / or their families
 - Accommodation checks, completed in Northumberland by either the NFRS or the Private Sector Housing Team
 - Three safeguarding visits per individual or family by officers from the council's Asylum Seeker & Refugee Team

9. The Council is also required to administer the **£350.00** 'thank you payment' per month for each Host for up to 12 months. Government will allocate additional funding for these payments, but they do expect councils to cover administration costs within the tariff.

10. A dedicated budget code has been established for the Homes for Ukraine Scheme to which the DBS checks and the cash payments are currently being charged.

11. There are currently **548¹** individual Ukrainian nationals registered on the DLUHC Foundry portal for Northumberland. The Government has committed to providing £10,500 per person in year one. This would mean that we could receive up to **£5,754,000**

12. We currently have **255** individuals who have arrived (as of 24th June 2022), this would mean that we would expect to receive **£2,677,500** in payments from Government.

13. If all **548** Ukrainian nationals were to arrive, we would require **£109,600** to fund the £200 per person subsistence payments. Current arrivals to date have required payments totalling **£51,000**.

14. There are currently **199** hosts registered on the DLUHC Foundry portal for Northumberland, with a further **1402** Expressions of Interest for phase 2. Each host and adult member of their household will require a DBS check at a normal cost of **£44** per person for an enhanced check should the family arriving from Ukraine include children. As the portal does not detail the numbers in the Host family household the potential costs for DBS check cannot be accurately confirmed.

15. The Council has decided that all DBS checks will be requested at an Enhanced level. We have a duty to safeguard our residents and we have made the decision that we will complete Enhanced DBS checks for all hosts as we believe this is in everyone's best interests. The Council is of the view that those fleeing Ukraine and looking to engage with the scheme are inherently vulnerable given the traumatic circumstances leading to their arrival in the UK.

¹ Data from 24th June 2022

16. Each host can receive £350 per month for up to 12 months as a thank you payment. At present, if all 199 host placements were to proceed, this would equate to **£835,800**. We currently have **119** Host families in place, our current commitment is therefore **£499,800**, however this is likely to increase as an increasing number of Hosts and Ukrainian nationals are matched.

17. All staff resource required to fulfil the requirements of the scheme is being drawn from existing resources and services, re-directed from other priorities to support the Homes for Ukraine scheme. This is not a sustainable, long-term option therefore additional recruitment is being progressed to support delivery.

Recruitment to additional posts is proposed to support the delivery of the scheme as it grows, which will include senior support, Resettlement Officers, EAL Teachers and assistants and a Tenancy Support Officer. There is also the potential to fund other services with the Government funding that has been allocated to the scheme.

18. No other funding stream exists from which funding can be drawn down, therefore an approval to spend before receipt of grant funding is requested to fill the gap between the current necessary spend and the receipt of payment from Government. There is currently no definite date from them when this is likely to be however June has been suggested as the first date that payments will start to be issued.

19. The approval to spend before receipt of grant funding will enable the council's team(s) to fulfil the obligations placed on it by Government and meet the needs of both the Hosts and the families or individuals arriving from Ukraine (details provided below)

Background

The Homes for Ukraine scheme was launched on 14 March 2022 by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. This scheme is open to Ukrainian nationals who were residents in Ukraine prior to 1 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.

The scheme allows individuals to sponsor named Ukrainians. The number of people who can access this scheme is uncapped and is dependent on the capacity of the sponsors / hosts who come forward.

Ukrainian individuals or families will be able to live and work in the UK for up to three years and access benefits, healthcare, employment, and other support. Those arriving need to meet standard security checks prior to being issued with a visa. Sponsors and all adults in sponsors' households will also be subject to initial Police National Computer (PNC), criminal records and Warnings Index checks by the Home Office.

Role of Councils

Councils have a number of important functions in supporting the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Councils will be expected to offer the categories of support listed below.

- **Accommodation checks**

Councils have a statutory duty to promote the welfare of adults and children at risk. The sponsor guidance makes clear that prospective sponsors will be subject to accommodation and safeguarding checks.

Councils must make at least one in-person visit prior to the arrival of guests wherever possible to confirm the suitability of the accommodation. The cost of checks cannot be passed to the sponsor or guest.

Following the guest(s)' arrival, councils are required to confirm as soon as possible that the guest is well and that there are no serious safeguarding or welfare concerns or needs for care and support. Where it is suspected that the adult may have care and support needs, a needs assessment should be undertaken during this visit in line with the requirements of the Care Act 2014.

- **DBS Checks**

The DBS application has to be started as soon as possible following receipt of data on sponsors and guests. The council must facilitate the application, by the sponsor and any other relevant individuals within the household, for the appropriate DBS checks.

The current guidance from DLUHC, is that:

- If a match is made which involves a guest who is a child (i.e., under 18), an Enhanced DBS check will be undertaken on all members of the sponsor household who are aged 16+. This includes a check of the children's barred list. However, this does not apply if the child guest is related to the host sponsor, in this instance only a Basic DBS check is required.
- If the council decides that an adult guest requires additional support, due to age, illness or disability and it is proposed that an adult (16+) member of the sponsoring household provides them with this support, then the local authority may ask for an Enhanced DBS check (including a check of the adults' barred list) to be undertaken on any member of the sponsor's household who is proposed to provide that support.
- In all other cases, including where there is a family relationship between the sponsor and the guest(s), Government guidance states that Basic DBS* check should be undertaken on all members of the sponsor household who are aged 16+.

Councils are expected to cover the cost of DBS checks from the £10,500 funding that is being provided to enable them to provide support to families to settle in.

Whilst noting current guidance, which states that a Basic DBS check should be undertaken if there are no children or vulnerable adults arriving as Guests, it is clearly the duty of the council to ensure that adequate arrangements exist to safeguard those individuals and families travelling to Northumberland. To that end, post discussions with Legal Services and Information Governance, it has been concluded that our safeguarding duty, can only be discharged by completion of **Enhanced** DBS checks for everyone. In general terms, those fleeing Ukraine and looking to engage with the scheme are inherently vulnerable given the traumatic circumstances leading to their arrival in the UK. They may also have little or no understanding or use of the English language and are therefore reliant upon others for support, and importantly, as little or no information is known about them in advance, other than gender and age, there is no means to assess whether any of

the guests require additional support until they have arrived and taken up residence, at which point they may already be exposed to a safeguarding risk.

- **Interim payment for guest**

The council where the sponsor accommodation is located should provide an interim payment (in line with other resettlement schemes) of £200 per guest for subsistence costs. The £200 payment is factored into the tariff and does not need to be repaid by the guest.

- **Education and childcare**

Just like families entering UK under the Afghan and Hong Kong BN(O) resettlement schemes, children arriving from Ukraine will have no specific additional priority for admission, but the council is under a duty to offer advice to parents on the school application process and should advise them where vacancies exist and how to apply.

If there are school places available in the local area, even if not in the immediate vicinity of the family's home, the council will work with families arriving from Ukraine to enable the children to attend school as soon as possible. It is expected that councils provide places and, where they can admit above their published admission numbers (PAN); admitting children of Ukrainian refugees as exceptions to the infant class size limit; as well as place such children using the in-year Fair Access Protocol where needed.

All young people in England are required to continue in education or training until their 18th birthday and most continue until the end of the academic year in which they turn 18. Guests living in the UK under Ukraine Family Scheme, or the Local Sponsorship Scheme for Ukraine are eligible to enrol as a student.

- **Service referrals**

Where necessary, councils are expected to provide advice and referrals to specialist public health services as appropriate e.g., mental health services, adult social care, and children's services.

- **Work and Benefits**

Councils are expected to support guests to access local Jobcentre Plus appointments for benefit assessments and job-seeking.

- **Homelessness assistance**

There may be some cases where the sponsor/guest relationship breaks down and the guest is homeless or at risk of homelessness. Councils' statutory homelessness duties will apply in this instance.

Funding for Councils

The government is providing funding at a rate of **£10,500** per person 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. Funding for future years will be reviewed in due course.

This funding will be un-ringfenced, with a number of conditions attached, and will match the tariff offered under the first year of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)

and Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP), although the role of councils will be different. For example, councils will not be asked to source initial accommodation under this scheme as this will be provided by the sponsor.

Councils will administer 'thank you' payments at the £350 per sponsoring household per month rate. Government have confirmed that they will allocate additional funding for these payments, but they expect councils to cover administration costs within the tariff.

The government is also providing additional funding to councils to provide education services for children from families arriving from Ukraine under this scheme. The Department for Education (DfE) will allocate 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
- Secondary (ages 11-18) - £8,755

These tariffs include support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Government expects councils to use the tariff to meet all of their associated costs (both for providing council services and for administering payments).

The government is providing councils with funding of £10,500 per person under this scheme for the first year. This funding will enable councils to provide support to families to rebuild their lives and fully integrate into communities.

Payment of this grant will be conditional on councils undertaking necessary safeguarding checks and providing the department with relevant data. DLUHC will use completed data extracted from Foundry to support grant payments, and to provide assurance that relevant grant conditions have been met.

Request

As the DLUHC have not yet confirmed when and how payments will be made to Local Authorities to support this scheme, the proposal is that approval be given to spend ahead of receipt of Government grant to enable the initial implementation of the scheme to progress and to enable to Hosts and the Ukrainian nationals to be supported, as required by Government.

The approval to spend before receipt of grant funding will enable the council's team(s) to fulfil the obligations placed on it by Government and meet the needs of both the Hosts and the families or individuals arriving from Ukraine. Current costs and estimated costs are as follows, although these are constantly changing as numbers of hosts increase and Ukrainian guests arrive.

	Estimated Costs/Grant based on current number of host families in place	Estimated Costs/Grant based on the number of registered host families (199) and

	(119) and actual Ukrainian National arrivals (255)	registered Ukrainian Nationals (548)
EXPENDITURE:		
Current commitment to subsistence payments (£200 per Ukrainian National)	£51,000	£109,600
Contingency for completion of required DBS checks (host families)	£20,944	£35,024 ²
Staff Recruitment :		
3 x Band 6 Resettlement Officer - (3 x £33,991)	£101,970	£101,970
1 x Band 8 Senior Resettlement Officer	£45,210	£45,210
1 x Band 6 Tenancy Support Officer (temporary accommodation & rematch)	£33,991	£33,991
2 x EAL Teaching Assistant Band 5 (2 x £30,030)	£60,060	£60,060
3 x EAL Teachers (3 x £49,897)	£149,691	£149,691
Education IT hardware support for children & young people	£30,000	£126,000
Translation Services	£30,000	£126,000
Exceptional Expenses for families	£30,000	£126,000
Estimated Overheads NCC internal administration and processing costs	£45,000	£135,000
Contingency	£50,000	£200,000
Estimated Total Expenditure	£647,866	£1,248,546
INCOME:		
Home Office Tariff – un-ringfenced with conditions (£10,500 per individual)	(£2,677,500)	(£5,754,000)
Estimated Amount to be Repaid to DLUHC	(£2,029,634)	(£4,505,454)

² Based upon 4 adults in host household and enhanced DBS checks

	Estimated Costs/Grant based on current number of host families in place (119)	Estimated Costs/Grant based on the number of registered host families (199)
Thank you payments (£350 per month per host family)	£499,800	£835,800
Home Office Reimbursement – Ringfenced (£350 per month per host family)	(£499,800)	(£835,800)
Total	£0	£0

Implications

Policy	Supports the delivery of the Corporate Plan 2021-2024 <i>Living & Learning - We will care for our residents, support the most vulnerable in our society and help people to live healthy lives. We will ensure the best education standards for our children and young people.</i>
Finance and value for money	An agreement to spend ahead of receipt of grant payments will allow the timely interventions to be implemented to support both the arrival of individuals and families from Ukraine as well as the Hosts, fulfilling the requirements detailed by DLUHC. Commitments to fund support will only be agreed if there is sufficient funding to be received by Government. Any additional funds required will be requested through an additional report.
Legal	There is a requirement that the council meet the obligations specified by the DLUHC in its Homes for Ukraine Guidance documents. Whilst not a statutory duty, there is an expectation that these obligations will be met in full.
Procurement	none
Human Resources	Recruitment to additional officer posts will be required to support delivery of the scheme.
Property	Accommodation is provided by the Host families. All required accommodation checks will be completed by the Private Sector Housing Team and NFRS, with the support of Environmental Health, ensuring that HHSS standards are considered.
Equalities	All interventions will be determined on an appropriate, equitable basis.

(Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Risk Assessment	Any risks will be assessed on an individual basis and appropriate risk assessments completed.
Crime & Disorder	none
Customer Consideration	The delivery of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme by council services will ensure that the customers' expectations are met, they feel supported, and all obligations are met.
Carbon reduction	none
Health & Wellbeing	Supporting the Homes for Ukraine scheme will ensure that we have a positive impact upon the health & wellbeing of both the Ukrainian nationals and their hosts.
Wards	All

Background papers:

[Homes for Ukraine: guidance for councils - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Report sign off.

Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

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