

HOMES FOR UKRAINE SCHEME

INTRODUCTION

The situation involving Ukraine Refugees continues to move at pace. Whilst we do now know more than we did last week, there are still several areas for which we are still awaiting further detailed Government advice.

Last week Michael Gove MP, provided some information about the Homes for Ukraine scheme <https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk/>

KEY FEATURES:

- There will be no limit on the number of Ukrainian people who can come to the UK as part of the scheme.
- Participants will be able to live and work in the UK for 3 years.
- They will be entitled to benefits, health, and education provision.
- Sponsors will need to commit to offering accommodation for a minimum of 6 months.
- The Minister stated that 'central and local government and civil society will step in if any accommodation arrangements break down'.
- Sponsors will need to have vetting checks, which will involve inspection of homes and at least a minimum level of DBS checks.
- Any potential sponsors who register on the government website will be sent a pack, which will include information about 'how to find a Ukraine national to link to' if they don't have connections with any already.
- The initial matches will be with 'known connections'.
- Work will be undertaken through charities, churches etc to develop links between refugees and potential sponsors.
- Local authorities will be provided with £10,500 per refugee for the provision of support services.

Some further context the Government have advised they have 14,000 Afghan refugees in hotels across the UK and a further 25,000 Asylum Seekers in accommodation and with more inbound flights, this number is going up every week.

CHECKS ON SPONSORS

It will be a role of the Council/s to visit the accommodation, to check its suitability and the suitability of the sponsor. Part of the decision regarding suitability of the sponsor will be informed by the relevant DBS check.

The Council/s will facilitate the application, by the sponsor and any other eligible individuals within the household, for the appropriate DBS checks. In terms of eligibility, within the Homes for Ukraine (HFU) scheme, the expectation 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 a family member of 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 members of the sponsor's household who is proposed to provide that support. Existing guidance regarding Regulated
- In all other cases, including where there is a family relationship between the sponsor and the guest(s), a basic check should be undertaken on all members of the sponsor household who are aged 16+.

APPLYING FOR DBS CHECKS

In terms of initiating DBS checks, the council and/or Registered Body (in most cases, they will be one and the same) will provide the sponsor (and any adults, 16 or over, in the sponsor's household) with the appropriate form, Basic or Enhanced, which will need to be completed by the individual.

The council will need to check the identity of each applicant and, for the Enhanced check, countersign the application form.

Please Note:

1. It is expected that the role of visiting accommodation to assess its suitability will be a function carried out by us as the District Council.
2. For whom is Authority responsible for the function of conducting the necessary DBS Check has yet to be determined at the time of writing this briefing note.

NEXT STEPS

As you can see, we continue to await daily news on the specifics of the scheme to enable us to start putting actions into place. All Suffolk Authorities, CCG's, DWP and Refugee Support Services are meeting regularly and working closely on the detail of the scheme as we learn more on a daily basis.

Lord Richard Harrington has been given the role of leading and coordinating the UK Government response and we are likely to receive both more information and further asks in the coming days and weeks.

We would encourage anyone that receives contact from anyone expressing an interest to help to use the links via the Suffolk County Council website, which includes the following link for anyone expressing an interest in helping.

Currently there is no need for items and goods to be donated for refugees in Suffolk at this stage. However, this situation might change. Therefore, those who think they might be able to help in anyway should be directed to make contact and record their interest in the first instance. So that SCC has their details and so they can get back to them if they are able to make use of their offer. Email refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk

LINK TO FURTHER INFORMATION

Suffolk County Council Website – Has webpages in relation to both Afghan and Ukraine Refugees: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/community-and-safety/communities/community-engagement/supporting-afghan-ukrainian-refugees/>

DLUHC has produced a frequently asked questions document about the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Announcement:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/emergency-support-put-in-place-for-ukrainian-nationals-entering-the-uk-with-their-pets>

More information:

<https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk/>

Expression of Interest:

<https://consult.communities.gov.uk/digital-delivery/register-to-support-homes-for-ukraine/> (As an individual)

<https://consult.communities.gov.uk/digital-delivery/register-to-support-homes-for-ukraine-org/>
(As an organisation)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-scheme-frequently-asked-questions>

- **Who will administer the £350 payment?** – At this stage we assume that this will be a role for Local Authorities through existing Revenue and Benefit Teams - TBC
- **No need for the Sponsor to provide meals?** - But UC claims will take 6 weeks, so there may be a need for early financial support - TBC
- **What if an existing social housing tenant offers a room?** – We will need to make sure this does not result in overcrowding.
- **What happens if Sponsor and refugee do not get on? An interim solution to relocate is still being established** TBC