

Information

for County Councillors

Sheet Number:
2017-21/220



From:	Lisa Westlake, Health Promotion Manager - Resettlement
Relevant SLT Director and sign-off date:	Trudi Grant, Director of Public Health
Date:	14/03/22
To:	All County Councillors

Ukrainian Refugees

Background - Somerset County Council, alongside the other councils in Somerset, is ready to support those who have been displaced by the war in Ukraine. We are ready to work with the Government and other partners in any co-ordinated resettlement scheme to bring safety and security to those in need of our help.

In previous refugee crisis, central government have co-ordinated well-organised and properly funded schemes to make sure that families are given not only housing, but other support which they so desperately need.

Historically, SCC has been the lead authority for co-ordinating the countywide response, with the district councils and voluntary sectors working alongside to support. The situation is fast moving and we are continuing to monitor developments.

A Tactical Preparedness Cell is being organised with key partners across districts, health, and the police to consider how to support those who may arrive in Somerset. This includes local VCSEs, who are mobilising support and thinking of ways that they can directly help and sponsor families.

Pathways for Resettlement – At the time of writing, two schemes have been announced:

- **The Ukraine Family Scheme** which allows family members of British nationals, UK settled persons and certain others to come to or stay in the UK.
- **Local Sponsorship Scheme for Ukraine** - The government has announced plans for a new sponsorship scheme “Homes for Ukraine” for those without any family ties to the UK. We are awaiting further detail from the Government (due late afternoon 14/03/21). This scheme encourages individuals, charities, community groups and businesses across the UK to offer a room or home to Ukrainians. Funding will be provided for those who wish to sponsor an individual or family. Details of how volunteers offer their accommodation has not been confirmed however a website gathering expressions of interest from potential hosts will be launched today (14.03.22). Hosts will be expected to house an individual or family for at least 6 months. Sponsored Ukrainians will be granted 3 years leave to remain in the UK and will be able to work, claim benefits and access public services during this period.

Local authorities will be entitled to £10,500 per Ukrainian refugee arriving via the sponsorship route, additional payments will be available to support school-age children.

For those who would like to support but not able to sponsor, opportunities for volunteering or to give donations can be found via our regularly updated webpage: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/refugee-resettlement/>

Housing/Accommodation: Whilst we wait for guidance on Homes for Ukraine, all offers of accommodation from private individuals and businesses are being logged. We will contact individuals direct and encourage them to make their offers of support via the Government’s portal, once this link is available to the public.

This is a fast developing situation and in Somerset we’re ready to play our part to support the Ukrainian people. Keep checking <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/refugee-resettlement/> for updates.

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