

Information

Sheet Number:
2022-27/15



for County Councillors

Official - Sensitive

From:	Brittney Strange, Public Health Specialist
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Relevant SLT Director and sign-off date:	Trudi Grant, Director of Public Health
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Date:	02/09/2022
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To:	All County Councillors
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Homes for Ukraine update

Homes for Ukraine workstreams

We have a multi-agency tactical group, chaired by Matthew Hibbert, Consultant in Public Health at Somerset County Council.

The work is divided in to seven streams:

- Accommodation (Sarah Stillwell, *Sedgemoor District Council*)
- Children & Education (Kate Daunton and Paul Shallcross, *Somerset County Council*)
- Communications (Peter Elliott, *Somerset County Council*)
- Health & Social Care (Shona Turnbull-Kirk, *Somerset ICB*)
- Support for Sponsors & Guests (Gordon East – CHARIS)
- Finance & Benefits (Mark Antonelli, *Somerset West & Taunton Council*)
- Info & Intelligence (Nicola Dawson, *Somerset County Council*)

Facts and figures (*As of 30th August*)

- Expressions of interest: 2,711 – These are sponsors who have 'expressed an interest' in participating in the scheme but are not matched to guests. It is the individual sponsor's role to match with a guest and apply for the scheme.
- Property checks that have been booked/completed: 599
- Completed DBS:
 - Enhanced: 765 initiated, 667 completed
 - Basic: 426 initiated, 358 completed
- Total DBS completed: 1,025
- Welfare Checks: 1163 completed from 513 households (as of 30/08/2022)

Decision Making

The Government ask councils to report on 5 areas in relation to guests' placements. A £350 'thank you' payment is then issued, subject to sponsors passing the checks. These are:

- 1) Residential accommodation exists
- 2) Accommodation visited and suitable
- 3) DBS initiated
- 4) Group arrived in accommodation
- 5) Safeguarding checks completed

Number of Sponsors and Guests

- 744 property offers by sponsors
- 1,189 Ukrainian groups
- 1,926 total Ukrainian guests matched to sponsors
- 1,187 Ukrainian arrivals to date

Current Issues

Transport

Transport solutions for Ukrainian guests within the County continue to provide a variety of challenges. The Homes for Ukraine team have recently submitted proposals to Members which includes a one-off payment of £400 to all Homes for Ukraine guests who will apply via an online form.

6 Month points

As per the last update, we are continuing to see a trickle of hosts who are unable to commit to continuing to host guests beyond the 6-month mark. However, we continue to consider various options to support guests, including the possibility of financial help.

Sponsor Update

Engagement with our weekly sponsor update is decreasing so this will be changing to a fortnightly update. We are also in the process of trying to obtain more contact details for guests so that, in time, updates can be translated and sent to them directly.

Ongoing cases of concern

Since the scheme has begun, a small percentage of placements have broken down. Breakdowns can happen for a variety of reasons which can range from cultural differences, a change in sponsor circumstances, differing household expectations between sponsors and guests, and relationship challenges. We are working with Workstream Leads and other partners to circulate a weekly update to sponsors, which will aim to help realistically manage housing expectations and signpost and guide sponsors and guests to preventative support.

Visa queries

It is worth noting that the Local Authority does not have information about when visas will be issued. This decision is made centrally by the Home Office. If sponsors have specific questions about visa applications, decisions, or delays, they should contact the UKVI Helpline:

*The Home Office has set up a bespoke helpline for customers needing assistance, who can contact UK Visas & Immigration on:
Telephone: + 44 808 164 8810 – select option 1 (0808 164 8810 from inside the UK – select option 1).*

For more information please contact:	Name: Brittney Strange Email: BStrange@somerset.gov.uk
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