

Information

Sheet Number:

2022-27/20



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:	16/09/2022
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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 (Livvi Grant, *Somerset County Council*)
- Health & Social Care (Shona Turnbull-Kirk, *Somerset ICB*)
- Support for Sponsors & Guests (Alex Melbourne, *CHARIS* and Lisa Westlake, *Resettlement Somerset County Council*)
- Finance & Benefits (Mark Antonelli, *Somerset West & Taunton Council*)
- Info & Intelligence (Nicola Dawson, *Somerset County Council*)

Facts and figures *(As of 13th September)*

- Expressions of interest: 2,627 – 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: 644 (data as of 16.09.22)
- Completed DBS:
 - Enhanced: 787 initiated, 689 completed
 - Basic: 437 initiated, 372 completed
- Total DBS completed: 1,061
- Welfare Checks: 1188 completed from 527 households (as of 13/09/2022)

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

- 732 property offers by sponsors
- 1,173 Ukrainians have arrived in Somerset up to 1 September 2021.
- 1512 Ukrainians have been matched and either arrived or issued visas. A further 154 visa applications are being processed.

Current Issues

Small Grant Fund - We are working with VCSE partners to make small grant funding available to groups with and without charitable status who are assisting with community integration and support. More details are expected in the coming weeks.

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 point

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 breakdowns and 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).*

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