

From: Roger Gough – Leader
Michael Hill - Cabinet Member for Community and
Regulatory Services

To: Cabinet - 31 March 2022

Subject: Ukraine Refugees

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: Regular Update to Cabinet

Electoral Division: All

Summary:

Following the Russian – Ukrainian conflict Central Government have launched two key programmes for Ukrainian Refugees to enter into the UK. This report seeks to summarise the schemes, key considerations and provide Cabinet with an update on the Kent approach.

Recommendation(s):

Cabinet is asked to comment on and note the Report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Ukrainian – Russia conflict has seen the largest humanitarian crisis since the second world war with approximately 3 million Ukrainian refugees leaving Ukraine to neighbouring countries to flee the conflict. The UK Government has positively responded with the development of two key pathways to enable refugees to enter the UK.
- 1.2 The two key schemes which are operating are the extended family scheme, where family members can come to the UK where they have existing family in the UK, and the ‘Homes for Ukraine Scheme’ which is where Ukrainian Refugees are sponsored to come to the UK by a host family or individual. Initially, individual members of the public can sponsor a guest from Ukraine who meet the eligibility criteria for this scheme. In later phases, organisations and community groups will be able to sponsor multiple guests.
- 1.3 Under the scheme, the sponsor receives a £350 per month ‘Thank You’ payment provided that they meet the scheme requirements. numbers are uncapped and restricted only by the number of eligible sponsors that come forward. Those accessing the scheme 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.

2. Homes for Ukraine and the Kent Response

2.1 Further guidance is due to be issued in respect of the detail for a number of elements of the scheme but it is clear that a coordinated multi agency response is needed across the public sector. In response to ensure that a coordinated approach across public sector organisations in Kent, a Kent Resilience Forum (KRT) structure has been adopted with the following groups:

- Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG)
- Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG)
- Media and Comms Cell (M&C)
- Data Cell
- Vulnerable People and Communities Cell (VPCC)
- Finance Group

2.2 The first meetings of the groups took place week commencing 21st March 2022. All partners across the County are participating in the groups and it is envisaged that the VPCC will enable community groups to work with partners to support the scheme in Kent. Key areas of focus across partners in the next week include:

2.2.1 Definition of the 'Welcome' approach in the County with a particular focus on key transport points of entry such as the Port of Dover. Initial assessments suggests that any entry via the County will be via Car/ Bus either on the Eurotunnel or Ferry Services as these are currently not operating foot passenger services. Foot passenger access to the UK is therefore via the Eurostar service which does not presently stop in Kent. The Department for Transport have confirmed that arrangements have been made to support onward travel.

2.2.2 Developing the safeguarding protocols and the support services that are required including accommodation, community services, education, social services for adults and children, public health and health services as part of the Homes for Ukraine pathway. The role of the voluntary sector will also be key in developing the partnership response as well as the protocol in the event that a sponsorship arrangement should break down.

2.3 For KCC, there are a number of services which will have a key role to play in the delivery of the scheme in relation to the safeguarding check and providing access and support to key services such as education provision.

3. Financial Implications

3.1 Under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, the government has confirmed it will provide 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 at this stage with future years to be reviewed. The £10,500 includes the initial £200 hardship payment which is payable to those accessing the scheme. This funding will be un-ringfenced, with a number of conditions attached.

- 3.2 Councils will administer 'Thank You' payments at the £350 per sponsoring household per month rate. Additional funding will be allocated for these payments, but Councils will be expected to absorb administration costs.
- 3.3 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
- 3.4 These tariffs include support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- 3.5 The payment arrangements are currently being confirmed along with the assessment of local service costs.

4. Legal implications

- 4.1 The Homes for Ukraine scheme requires local authorities to undertake a number of key roles in the delivery of the scheme. Further guidance is expected regarding the scheme and the legal framework.
- 4.2 The DPIA has been developed by DLUHC to enable data to be shared with upper tier authorities to then be shared with local partners as appropriate.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The government has established the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme to support the humanitarian impact of the large number of Ukrainians who are leaving Ukraine to flee the conflict. Kent County Council and its services play a key role in providing support and for those that come into the County which is a key impact on education, safeguarding, community and public health services. KCC is fully engaged in the KRF with partners to support the development of the multiagency response.
- 5.2 Whilst some guidance has been issued, further guidance is expected along with the first data flows to support the development of local plans. Harnessing the support of local communities and the voluntary sector in Kent will be essential to support community integration.

6. Recommendation(s)

Recommendation(s):
Cabinet is asked to comment on and note the Report

7. Background Documents

None.

8. Contact details

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