

From: Roger Gough, Leader of Kent County Council

Rebecca Spore, Director of Infrastructure

To: Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee – 26 July 2023

Subject: Homes for Ukraine Programme Update

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee 4 May 2022

Future Pathway of report: None

Electoral Division: All

Summary:

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has seen the largest humanitarian crisis since the Second World War, with approximately 12 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 Ukrainian refugees to enter the UK.

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. As part of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, the government requires local government to undertake several checks and provide support to both the sponsor and Ukrainian guests. In two tier areas responsibilities fall to both County and District councils and Kent County Council (KCC) is working closely with its partners to ensure a coordinated response is provided.

In addition, several KCC services, in particular Children's and Adult Social Care have a statutory obligation to provide the necessary support. The government was funding £10,500 per guest, though this has now reduced to £5,900, plus an ongoing monthly "thank you" payment of £350 to sponsors to support the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. Additional funding was being made available in respect of education, but this ceased 31 March 2023. This funding was made available to cover exceptional costs outside of the funding allowance which are necessary to deliver the scheme and to support both the Sponsors and Ukrainians coming into the UK under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. This report updates on the scheme which commenced March 2022.

Recommendation(s):

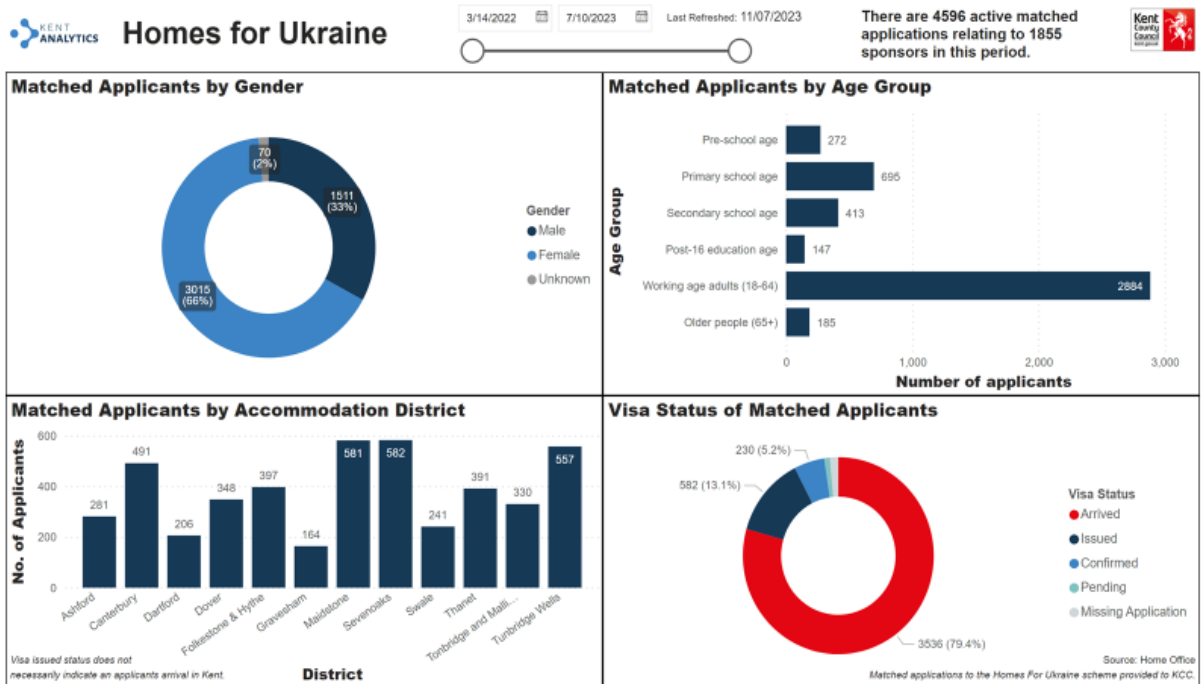
The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to note the contents of this update report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has seen the largest humanitarian crisis since the Second World War with approximately 4 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' whereby 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.
- 1.3. Under the scheme, the sponsor receives a £350 per month 'Thank You' payment provided 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.

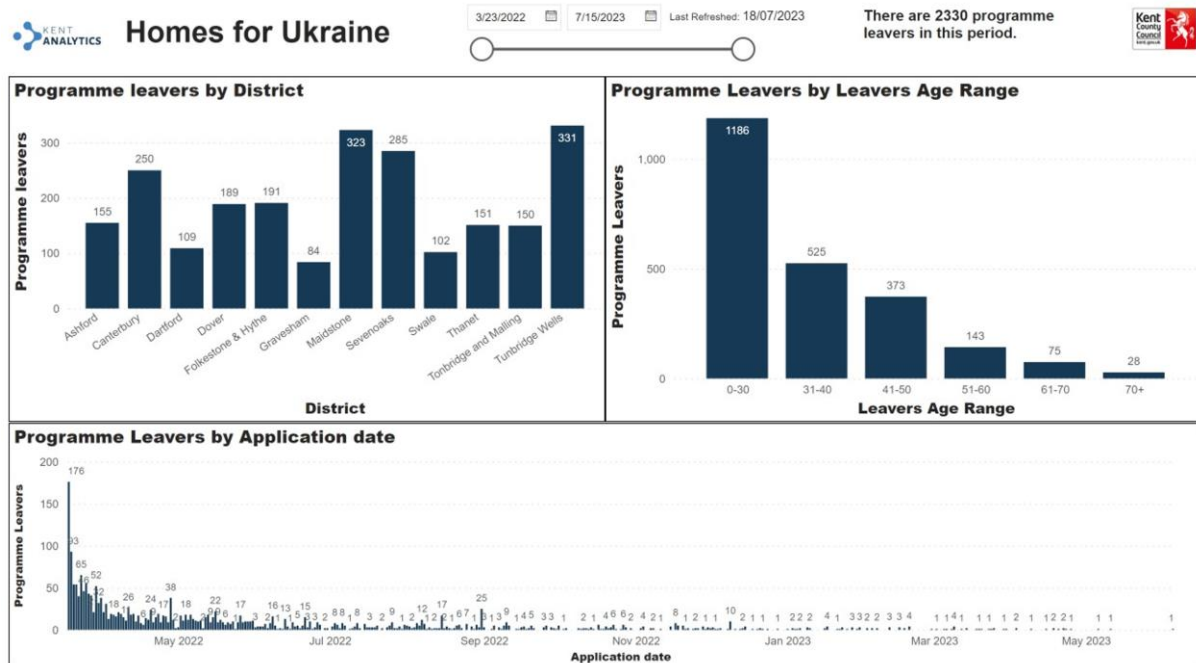
2. Homes for Ukraine Scheme to date

- 2.1 Update on applications to date.



2.2 Update on those that have left the scheme to date since arrival in Kent.

Of those that have left the scheme, 51% of guests have moved into Private Rented Accommodation (1254) and 32% have returned to Ukraine.



3 Financial Implications - Current financial position

3.1 Income

- 3.1.1 KCC have received £31,185,000 for arrivals 1 March 22 – 30 November 22 based on £10,500 per guest x 2970 arrivals.
- 3.1.2 Department for Education (DFE) funding for the same period £6,728,885.

3.2 Spend up to 31 March 2023

- 3.2.1 Spending for 22/23 was £13,384,000, of this figure, £9,416,000 has been distributed to Districts and £3,968,000 was KCC expenditure.

The underspend rolled into 23/24 - £9,633,000 allocated to KCC and £8,168,000 allocated for districts.

- 3.2.2 KCC has been making additional thank you contributions to hosts to compensate for increased costs of living and have been making payments to guests when they move into private rented accommodations to purchase necessities. This has been based on group size, agreed from October 2022 to March 2023 to support cost of living rises. Following positive feedback from hosts, this is now until March 2024.
- 3.2.3 A recent meeting with finance leads from districts has taken place to map spending vs the funding provided, so future funding could be agreed by all considering the changes to the Programme. The current focus is now to support guests into private rental accommodation as hosting arrangements end. There is shortage of affordable accommodation in Kent, so districts have been providing deposits and rent advances. Following Central Government announcement re £500m Local Authority Housing Fund (is an innovative capital fund that supports local authorities in England to obtain housing for those who are unable to find settled accommodation on resettlement schemes) it has been agreed that Kent will provide match funding for those properties earmarked for Homes for Ukraine guests. This will ensure those with young families that cannot afford private rented could be provided with long term housing.

4 Governance and Legal implications

- 4.1 The Council has several existing legal duties to arriving adults and Children, irrespective of their country of origin or where they may eventually reside within the County. These duties exist pursuant to several pieces of legislation that apply to children and adults.
- 4.2 The intention was to use existing contracting and commissioning processes where possible. Due to the urgency and fast-moving nature of the delivery of the scheme a dedicated team to offer support to the hosts and guests has been created.

- 4.3 Relevant due diligence has been undertaken at project level, including in relation to Data Management and Equalities Impacts. Both documents have been submitted and are monitored as part of the project.
- 4.4 The delegations put in place by the key decision for ongoing management of grant funding and spend is being vested by the Corporate Director for Finance, in accordance with the agreed funding framework. This delegation includes reviewing, and where necessary revising, the spend arrangements after consultation with the Leader of the Council.
- 4.5 A Homes for Ukraine Monitoring Group (HfUMG) has been established and meets regularly to oversee and apply the funding framework to ensure consistency of all spend.

5 Equalities implications

- 5.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken.

6 Other corporate implications

- 6.1 Given the need to implement this programme quickly, the Council operated within existing data sharing protocols. A full Data Protection impact Assessment has been submitted to support the programme.

7 Conclusions

- 7.2 This scheme saw a large influx of guests during May-July 2022 and once the new KCC Homes for Ukraine was formed, guests have been supported with information and advice to meet their ongoing needs. Third Party agencies have been working with the guests to support with benefits, employment, wellbeing, and housing. As the programme has developed over time the focus has moved from the initial scheme set up to supporting guests move into sustainable accommodation as the hosting arrangements have come to an end.
- 7.3 The programme has utilised the funding as per the funding framework and has ensured all service delivery costs have been charged to the programme.

8 Recommendation(s)

Recommendation(s):

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to note the contents of this update report.

9. Background Documents

- 9.1 Appendix A - Previous decision report 22-00037
- 9.2 Appendix B - Urgent Record of decision 22-00037
- 9.3 Appendix C - EQIA 22-00037

10. Contact details.

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