

Research Briefing

Number CBP 9709

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20 January 2023

Homes for Ukraine: What happens after six months?

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Overview

As the initial six-month hosting period of the [Homes for Ukraine scheme](#) comes to an end for many guests and hosts, they must consider what comes next.

The Homes for Ukraine scheme (formally known as the Ukraine Sponsorship scheme) allows individuals in the UK to sponsor a named Ukrainian national or family to come to live in the UK with them, providing they have suitable accommodation to offer. [Under the scheme, launched in March 2022](#), UK-based sponsors commit to providing accommodation for at least six months after the arrival of their Ukrainian guests.

Super Sponsor schemes in the devolved administrations

Ukrainians could apply to be [sponsored directly by the Scottish or Welsh Governments under the ‘super sponsor’ schemes](#). Under such sponsorships, those governments would act directly as sponsors, removing the need for applicants to be matched with an individual before they could travel to the UK. The [‘super sponsor’ scheme was paused for new applications in Scotland and Wales in July 2022](#) to “ensure safe accommodation can continue to be provided to those who have already applied”, and has not been resumed.

The scheme has [enabled over 110,000 Ukrainians to arrive in the UK](#), as of 2 January 2023.¹

On 14th December 2022, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities [Michael Gove announced to the Commons several updates to the scheme](#).² Key changes included an extension in the duration of ‘thank you’ payments, as well as an increase in the minimum amount given to some hosts. A Local Housing Fund is being launched and changes are being made to reduce the funding provided to local councils for new Ukrainian arrivals from 1 January 2023.

Later that month, the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities [Committee Chair, Clive Betts, wrote to Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities \(DLUHC\) Ministers](#) (pdf), to highlight the risk of homelessness in the scheme. Christmas was the six-month cut-off point for many sponsors hosting guests and so there were concerns over the number of Ukrainian families in the UK who may find themselves homeless.

2 Accommodation options after the first six months

2.1 Continued sponsorship

If both parties are happy to extend the sponsorship beyond six months, the DLUHC guidance on [your living arrangements four to six months after moving to the UK](#) encourages guests to remain with their host until they are ready to move on.

Updated and extended ‘thank you’ payments

To support the sponsorship scheme, two changes have been made to the optional ‘thank you’ payments offered to hosts.

Firstly, the duration of the ‘thank you’ payments [has been extended from 12 months to two years](#).³

Secondly, in recognition of the increased cost-of-living, people hosting guests who have been in the country for more than a year will be eligible for a ‘thank you’ payment of £500, increased from £350. Sponsors who are hosting guests

¹ UKVI, [Ukraine Family Scheme, Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme \(Homes for Ukraine\) and Ukraine Extension Scheme visa data](#), 19 January 2023

² UIN HCWS447 [on [Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Update](#)], 14 December 2022

³ DLUHC press release, [New over £650 million support package for Ukrainians sees increased ‘thank you’ payments for longer-term hosts](#), 14 December 2022

who have been ‘rematched’ with new sponsors will be eligible for this increased payment.

These changes may help guests who are not yet ready to move into independent accommodation to stay in sponsorship for longer, where sponsors are willing to extend placements. The increased and extended payments also seek to incentivise continued sponsorship and rematching.

Differences in thank you payments between councils

‘Thank you’ payments have always been distributed by local councils. Some local authorities had already begun to offer “uprated” payments before Michael Gove’s December 2022 announcement.

For example, a [report on London councils’ response to the crisis in Ukraine, published by The Work Rights Centre \(pdf\) in January 2023](#), found that several councils had increased ‘thank you’ payments to sponsors, in an attempt to incentivise continued sponsorship.⁴ [Essex County Council had announced an increase in ‘thank you’ payments from £350 to £550](#) in late November 2022, as well as a one-off payment of £500 for hosts who would continue their sponsorship for all or at least part of December 2022.⁵

In his statement, Gove voiced the government’s support for councils “uprating” these payments. He described the ‘thank you’ payments set by the government as a “minimum” recognition of the contributions made by sponsors.⁶

Changes to local authority funding

The government [will be reducing the tariff given to each local authority](#) from 1 January 2023 for new arrivals from Ukraine. From this point, councils will receive £5,900 per guest to support the visitor and their sponsor, alongside ‘thank you’ payments made to hosts.

Local authorities will continue to receive the previous year one tariff of £10,500 to support those guests who have already arrived in the UK. In his announcement, [Gove explained that the change was due to a fraction of Ukrainian arrivals returning to Ukraine](#) as well as “the need to manage public finances at a time of significant economic challenge for the UK and the global economy”.

The Ukraine education tariff will continue in 2022-23 under the same rate and terms: a per child tariff of £3,000 for early years, £6,580 for primary and £8,755 for secondary with payments calculated on a pro-rata basis.

Many local councils have their own information and resources for the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, which will outline any local differences to the scheme.

⁴ Working Rights Centre, [On the frontline: London councils’ responses to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine](#) (pdf) p26, 10 January 2023

⁵ Essex County Council, [Increase to Homes for Ukraine payments for sponsors](#), 29 November 2022

⁶ UIN HCWS447 [on [Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Update](#)], 14 December 2022

In the 2023/24 financial year, the government will provide [£150 million to local authorities and devolved governments to support Ukrainian guests](#) as they move into their own homes and to combat the risk of homelessness. Funding will be allocated in relation to the distribution of Ukrainian guests across the UK. The government has said that further information on this funding will be published shortly.

The Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee [has questioned the change in funding](#) (pdf). It raised concerns that local councils would struggle to support guests with the reduced funds. Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for DLUHC Felicity Buchan explained that the new funding figures were calculated as part of the government's "best assessment".⁷

2.2 Finding a new host

The [living arrangements four to six months after moving to the UK guidance page](#) includes a section for Ukrainians who cannot stay with their sponsor past six months. It advises them to contact their local council as soon as possible. It states that the council may be able to help find a new host, but only if the current host has failed council checks or if the council decides it is not suitable or safe for a guest to stay in their current host arrangement.⁸

Advice on how a guest may find a new host themselves and [a link to organisations who may be able to help find new hosts](#) are also outlined. Guests are advised that local councils may be able to direct them to local charities and community groups that could be of help.

As mentioned above, the government hopes to "incentivise further sponsorship and rematching" through the [changes made to the 'thank you' payment scheme](#).

In the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee evidence session referenced above, Parliamentary Undersecretary Felicity Buchan highlighted the continued need for new sponsors in the case of rematching, to keep Ukrainian guests in the areas in which they have settled:

Clearly, people have now settled into areas. Their children are going to schools. They may have found work. While we may have interest across the country, it is also very important that we have new sponsors in certain areas where there is a mismatch of supply and demand, but local authorities are very on top of that.⁹

⁷ Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee, [Oral evidence: Ukraine Refugee Schemes](#) (pdf), 16 January 2023 HC 464, Q127

⁸ DLUHC, [Homes for Ukraine: Guidance for guests](#), 16 January 2023

⁹ Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee, [Oral evidence: Ukraine Refugee Schemes](#) (pdf), 16 January 2023 HC 464, Q103

Checks for rematching

Councils are responsible for sponsor suitability checks, as [“rematching will be council-led and in-country”](#).¹⁰ Relevant DBS and accommodation checks should be completed before guests arrive at their new accommodation wherever possible. If a sponsor is found to be unsuitable, the guest should not move into the accommodation and the council will record the relevant information in the Foundry case management system (CMS). All CMS checks must be completed before ‘thank you’ payments can be issued.

2.3

Moving into privately rented accommodation

If Ukrainian guests are considering renting private accommodation, the [Homes for Ukraine Guidance for Councils](#) page advises councils to direct them to guidance on their [rights and responsibilities as tenants](#).¹¹

Support for privately rented accommodation differs for those who applied under the ‘super sponsor’ scheme in Scotland and Wales, as guests are directed into such accommodation upon arrival in the UK.

Finding private rental accommodation guidance across the UK

The Welsh Government [is working with Rent Smart Wales and landlord representative groups](#) to establish if there are properties they will consider making available for rent to people fleeing Ukraine. Guests are being directed to the [Rent Smart Wales website](#) for guidance on renting a property in Wales.

In Scotland, [local authorities are advising](#) that guests will be able to rent a property “like anyone else” at the end of their six-month sponsorship, advising that the council can offer support if needed.¹² Further guidance on this will be published in due course.

A [how to rent in England](#) guide has also been published, available in [Ukrainian](#) and [Russian](#).

The government has confirmed that [Ukrainians supported by the Homes for Ukraine scheme will be able to apply for housing costs support](#) through Housing Benefit or Universal Credit if they have a rental liability when they move on from the scheme.¹³

In order to claim this Housing Benefit however, proof of tenancy is required. This was described at the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee

¹⁰ DLUHC, [Checks for rematching: Homes for Ukraine](#), 16 January 2023

¹¹ DLUHC, [Homes for Ukraine: council guides](#), 16 January 2023

¹² West Dunbartonshire Council, [Scottish Super Sponsor Scheme FAQ's](#)

¹³ PQ 142467 [[on Housing Benefit and Universal Credit: Refugees](#)], 18 March 2022

evidence session as a “chicken-and-egg” situation for Ukrainian guests, who were struggling to both find and fund privately rented accommodation.¹⁴

In that session, MP Paul Holmes also highlighted the wider problems Ukrainian guests were facing when trying to access the private rental sector. These included the size of deposits required from landlords, the length of tenancies that could be issued and the need for a guarantor. Parliamentary Undersecretary Felicity Buchan emphasised the work local authorities have done to support Ukrainian guests struggling with such issues, citing cases where some authorities were helping fund initial deposits. She also explained that the government is in talks with the [National Residential Landlords Association](#) on the issue.¹⁵

Eddie Hughes, former Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the DLUHC has previously [highlighted broader government plans for the provision of housing to refugees](#), particularly in areas where there is a housing shortage:

The support for the people coming to the UK under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme sits alongside our commitment to deliver affordable homes.

Since 2010, we have delivered over 574,100 new affordable homes, including over 403,400 affordable homes for rent, of which over 154,600 homes are for social rent.¹⁶

Statutory homelessness duties

When a sponsorship arrangement has broken down or is not being continued after the initial six-month arrangement, and Ukrainian guests are unable to secure other alternative suitable accommodation, [then council statutory homelessness duties will apply](#).

3 Government action to address concerns about the risk of homelessness

As mentioned above, Chair of the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee Clive Betts wrote to DLUHC ministers on 20 December 2022 [to raise concerns about increased homelessness amongst Ukrainian families](#)

¹⁴ Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee, [Oral evidence: Ukraine Refugee Schemes](#) (pdf), 16 January 2023 HC 464, Q111

¹⁵ As above

¹⁶ PQ 142471 [[on Housing: Refugees](#)], 18 March 2022

(pdf). DLUHC data [showed a nearly 40% increase in homelessness cases](#) in England under the scheme in November from the previous month.¹⁷

This has proven a persistent concern, as Chair of the Local Government Association (LGA) Cllr James Jamieson [spoke on the issue of homelessness in October 2022](#):

We are deeply concerned at the growing number of Ukrainians presenting as homeless to their council and, in particular, the significant rise in the number of those who arrived through the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

... Council housing and homelessness services are already under significant pressures and further increases may mean families are forced to move into temporary accommodation away from the new schools, jobs and communities they have been building since they arrived.¹⁸

New financial support

As mentioned above, a [new funding scheme of £150 million](#) will be launched in the 2023/24 financial year to support Ukrainian guests as they move into their own homes and to reduce the risk of homelessness. The government says that full details of this scheme will be published in due course.

Michael Gove also [announced the launch of the £500 million Local Authority Housing Fund](#). The Fund is designed to support English councils that are facing the most significant housing pressures due in part to the arrival of Ukrainian refugees. As well as addressing immediate pressures, the scheme aims to also build a “sustainable stock of affordable housing for the future”. Gove explained:

Whilst helping to fulfil the UK’s humanitarian duties to assist those fleeing war, the fund will create a lasting legacy for UK nationals by providing a new supply of accommodation for councils with which to address local housing and homelessness pressures.¹⁹

In their report, the Work Rights Centre also [noted the scale of the housing pressure](#) this new Housing Fund seeks to address:

Though a welcome measure, it is important to remember that the housing stock deficit is crushingly larger. According to research commissioned by the National Housing Federation and Crisis, to truly fix the housing stock deficit, the [UK would need to build 145,000 new affordable homes every year](#), until 2031.²⁰

¹⁷ DLUHC, [Homelessness management information - Ukrainian nationals: England](#), 12 January 2023

¹⁸ LGA First, [Homeless Ukrainian numbers rising](#), 18 October 2022

¹⁹ UIN HCWS447 [on [Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Update](#)], 14 December 2022

²⁰ Working Rights Centre, [On the frontline: London councils’ responses to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine](#) (pdf) p24, 10 January 2023

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Further reading

The following guidance documents are regularly updated with changes to the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, and often deal with commonly asked questions:

DLUHC, [Homes for Ukraine scheme: frequently asked questions](#), GOV.UK, 14 March 2022

DLUHC, [Homes for Ukraine: guidance for councils](#), GOV.UK, 18 March 2022

DLUHC, [Homes for Ukraine: sponsor guidance](#), GOV.UK, 25 March 2022

DLUHC, [Your living arrangements four to six months after moving to the UK](#), GOV.UK, 5 August 2022

Other links:

DLUHC, [Checks for rematching: Homes for Ukraine](#), 16 January 2023

DLUHC press release, [New over £650 million support package for Ukrainians sees increased 'thank you' payments for longer-term hosts](#), 14 December 2022

DLUHC, [Statutory homelessness duties: Homes for Ukraine](#), 16 January 2023

Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee, [Oral evidence: Ukraine Refugee Schemes](#) (pdf), 16 January 2023

Work Rights Centre, [On the frontline: London councils' responses to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine](#) (PDF), 10 January 2023

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