

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Communities) Introduced by (Executive Member (Early Intervention))	Council	18 July 2023

Homes for Ukraine Grant Funding

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	Not applicable
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Purpose of the Report

1. The information in this report provides a breakdown of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) funding committed to Chorley Council to assist with the costs of supporting Ukrainian refugees (also known as guests) and local sponsors under the Homes for Ukraine (HfU) Scheme.
2. The purpose of this report is to provide an update to members and ask that consideration be made to the recommendations listed below.

Recommendations

3. To receive the Ukrainian guest funding allocation of £476,000 and create a budget to allocate the funding (please refer to Table 1).
4. To receive further Ukrainian guest grant funding allocations and create an equivalent level of budget to allocate the funding for subsequent financial years.
5. The funds will be allocated by the Executive Member for Housing in accordance with the requirements of the scheme.

Reasons for recommendations

6. The DLUHC policies and procedures associated with the HfU scheme are subject to regular change. As a consequence, so are the support needs of Ukrainian guests and the pressures on internal teams. The above recommendations will give the Communities team the opportunity to further scope out proposals for expenditure which align to the needs of the Ukrainian community and internal teams, and also allow for flexibility as these needs evolve over time.

Other options considered and rejected

- To return the funding to DLUHC and not use it to support Ukrainian guests relocated to Chorley.

Corporate priorities

- The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Housing where residents can live well	A green and sustainable borough
An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas	Healthy, safe and engaged communities

Background to the report

- The HfU scheme was launched by the government on 14 March 2022. As part of this scheme, funding was allocated to local authorities for each new Ukrainian guest relocated to a district area and residents who applied to be sponsors of these guests.
- This report provides an overview of the grant funding allocation for Chorley, details the outcomes of scoping activity undertaken to date and provides recommendations for the approval of funding allocations.

Introduction

- The HfU scheme allows people living 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.
- As of 31 March 2023, there are 69 Ukrainian refugees resettled in Chorley via the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. This does not include refugees resettled via the Ukraine family scheme. The adult guests resettled in Chorley are predominantly female. This is because visas are only granted for males from certain professions as there is an expectation for them to support the military effort in Ukraine.

Ukrainian Guest Funding Allocation for Year 1

- From March 2022 to 31st December 2022, DLUHC issued funding at a rate of £10,500 per new arrival to upper tier councils to enable them to provide support to families to rebuild their lives and fully integrate into communities. The £10,500 for Ukrainian nationals was initially for the first year but after a government review in October 2022, local authorities have been informed that this tariff is to be used to fund 24 months of provision.
- In two tier areas, it is a condition of the funding that councils must agree a plan locally to make prompt payments to lower tier authorities in relation to all the services which they provide to guests under the HfU scheme, during the full duration of the scheme.
- This funding comes with a number of conditions attached. The government expects councils to use the tariff to meet all of their associated costs (both for providing council services and for administering payments).
- Out of the £10,500 funding, district councils are allocated the following:

- £2,500 per person to cover housing and homelessness costs
- £1,000 per person to cover community integration costs

Ukrainian Guest Funding Allocation for Year 2 (From January 2023)

17. From 1 January 2023, upper tier councils will receive funding of £5,900 for each new arrival to support guests and their sponsors. Given the significant decrease in the tariff, plus the late stage at which councils were informed that the year 1 tariff was to be extended to cover 24 months, rather than 12, Lancashire County Council have reduced the funding to district councils.
18. Out of the £5,900 funding, district councils have been allocated the following:
- £1,500 per person to cover housing and homelessness costs

Ukrainian Guest Funding Received in 2022/2023

Table 1: Funding Allocation Timeline (Ukraine Guest Funding)

Quarter	Total Allocation	Housing/Homelessness Allocation	Community Integration Allocation
1	£129,500	£92,500	£37,000
2	£199,500	£142,500	£57,000
3	£108,500	£77,500	£31,000
4	£38,500	£30,500	£8,000
Total	£476,000	£343,000	£133,000

19. A small proportion of this funding has been utilised across 2022/2023 to cover costs associated with supporting community groups who are directly helping Ukrainian Guests, enhanced cost of living Thank You payments for sponsors during the winter months and homelessness and housing 'move on' support for Ukrainian guests when required.
20. The delays in developing a comprehensive spending plan for the HfU funding are explained further in the report.

Sponsor Thank You Payments

21. Since June 2022, monthly Thank You payments of £350 have been allocated to sponsors. Government guidance stipulates that sponsors will receive £350 a month during the first 12 months of their guests' stay. This increases to £500 once the guest has been in the UK for 12 months. The aim of this increase is to help sponsors who are able to continue hosting for longer, up to a maximum duration of 2 years.

22. For the allocation of Thank You payments Chorley Council pays sponsors as an advance and then claims any expenditure back quarterly from Lancashire County Council. Table 2 below highlights the amount of funding allocated and received for 2022/2023 Thank You payments.

Table 2: Funding Allocation Timeline for 2022/2023 (Sponsor Thank You Payments)

Quarter	Number of Thank You Payments Issued	Total Amount
1 and 2	122	£42,700
3	102	£35,700
4	144	£50,400
Total		£128,800

Welfare Checks for Single Ukrainian Adults

23. In June 2022, Chorley Council agreed to undertake the welfare checks for single Ukrainian adults who relocated to the borough. These welfare checks are one of the key components of the safeguarding requirements of the scheme. Chorley Council is in a unique position in that it has an internal Refugee Resettlement team which means that it is well placed to provide this service. Other Lancashire district councils do not have such internal teams and therefore, the welfare check service for single adults was commissioned out to an external provider. Lancashire County Council's Children and Families Wellbeing Service were commissioned to undertake the welfare checks for families across Lancashire, including Chorley.
24. Lancashire County Council has allocated funding to Chorley Council to deliver the welfare checks service for single adults. The first funding allocation of £10,000 is to cover staff costs, travel expenses, administrative support and all other costs incurred in fulfilling the outcomes of the service. The requirements of the second allocation of £30,000 are less prescriptive, but the agreement states that the funding should be used to provide a welfare check service under the HfU scheme in Chorley.
25. Allocation 1 has been used to support with staffing and administration costs within the Communities team up to 23 September 2023. Allocation 2 will cover ongoing staffing and administrative costs up to 24 June 2024. A breakdown of the funding received and expenditure to date can be seen in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Funding Allocation Timeline (Welfare Check Funding)

Period	Total Allocation	Expenditure
Allocation 1: 23 June 2022 – 23 September 2022	£10,000	£698 has been allocated to cover 2022/2023 additional staff costs £9,302 has been allocated to support 2022/2023 administrative costs

Allocation 2: 24 September 2022 – 24 June 2024	£30,000	£26,698 has been allocated to support 2023/2024 administrative costs (up to June 2024) £3,302 has been allocated to projected staff costs for 2023/2024 (up to June 2024)
Total	£40,000	

Homelessness Prevention Funding Received in 2023/2024

26. On 10 June, the DLUHC announced and published allocations of £150m homelessness prevention funding. In England, the funding will be provided to local authorities as a top-up to the Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG), and is allocated 66% based on the existing Homelessness Prevention Grant allocations and 34% based on Homes for Ukraine arrivals (using the local authority data from 4 April 2023).
27. Chorley has been allocated £87,996.
28. At a government briefing on 14 June, the following was highlighted:
- The funding is ring fenced for homelessness
 - Ideally, the funding should be used to support guests with accessing privately rented accommodation, employment and sponsorship support.
 - The funding is not ring fenced to Ukrainian guests and can be spent on all residents as long as the expenditure prevents homelessness
 - The funding can be used to purchase household items, such as white goods and furniture as long as the expenditure prevents homelessness
 - There will be no requirements for additional reporting on this funding other than what the council already reports on the Homelessness Prevention Grant spending
 - The same conditions for spending the Homelessness Prevention Grant funding apply to this funding also
 - The funding can be allocated to sponsor top-ups as long as a sponsor is willing to host for a minimum of 6 months
 - The funding must be spent within the 2023/2024 financial year. Any underspend must be returned to the DLUHC in accordance with Homelessness Prevention Grant conditions
29. This funding will be used to enhance the support provided by the Housing Solutions team in line with Homelessness Prevention Grant requirements. Therefore, the funding will be used for homelessness prevention generally, addressing the wider impacts of homelessness as well as supporting Ukrainian guests. Reporting on this funding will be undertaken by the Housing Solutions team using the H-CLIC government statistical service.

Funding Spending Plan Delays

30. Table 1 indicates that the HfU funding has been received throughout 2022/2023 and currently, the majority of the funding remains unallocated. The main reasons for this are as follows:
- a. Informal consultation with community stakeholders, sponsors and Ukrainian guests has been ongoing to allow Refugee Resettlement Officers to be able to

ascertain need and any gaps in provision. This is particularly relevant to housing and homelessness needs. Chorley has been fortunate in that the scheme has resulted in very few homelessness presentations to date and officers are attempting to ascertain why this is the case.

- b. When the conflict in Ukraine began in March 2022, the scheme rolled out at a considerable pace which did not allow for the development of a spending plan
- c. Consultation needed to be undertaken with internal teams to ascertain what impacts the HfU would have on their service areas and a funding allocation needed to be agreed
- d. Within the Communities team, scoping out an effective approach for allocating the funding has been postponed due to the standing up of a temporary asylum seeker hotel in December 2022, the rolling out of the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and existing commitments to the UK Resettlement Scheme
- e. Management of the HfU scheme, and the undertaking of such scoping work, is a new requirement which previously was not funded and therefore not allocated within the team.

Impacts of the HfU Scheme on Internal Teams

31. The Communities team have needed to develop several processes to ensure that sponsors and Ukrainian guests can access the relevant support services. For example, Refugee Resettlement Officers have developed a regular Sponsor Support Network which provides advice and guidance to sponsors and have worked with a group of Ukrainian expatriates to develop a constituted community group that supports guests. Similarly, officers have worked with a number of existing community groups who have extended their offer to support those effected by the conflict in Ukraine. In addition to this, Refugee Resettlement Officers have supported the case management of homelessness and safeguarding cases. There are also additional requirements at county level to attend regular multi-agency meetings and provide monitoring data. This support has been provided in addition to the teams' commitments to the UK Resettlement Scheme, asylum seeker dispersal and the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy.
32. The Public Protection team regularly receive requests to undertake inspections or checks on sponsor properties prior to a guest(s) arrival. This is undertaken to ensure that guests are not accommodated in properties that do not meet the required standards.
33. The Housing Solutions team have been required to support guests who have been made temporarily homeless due to a breakdown in the relationship with their sponsor. The resource from the Housing team is intensive due to the complexity of the individuals and the additional support required to ensure they are fully supported.

Support Available from Community Stakeholders in Chorley

34. In Chorley, there are several organisations that offer support to Ukrainian guests; Chorley Ukrainian Community Group Kalyna, Chorley District Support for Ukraine and local church networks.
35. The Chorley Ukrainian Community Group Kalyna was established in May 2022. The support they offer includes English language acquisition, health and wellbeing support, cultural awareness trips and general signposting to other services. This organisation has received a small proportion of the community integration funding to support these activities.

36. Chorley and District Support for Ukraine is based at one of the units on Market Walk in Chorley town centre. This is an informal or non-constituted group of Ukrainian and local volunteers who support Ukraine by collecting and arranging the transportation of donations to the country. This group has benefited indirectly from a small proportion of the community integration funding as they do not have a group bank account.
37. Local church networks have been particularly proactive in offering support to Ukrainian guests who have become members of their respective congregations. For example, St Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Chorley have organised a series of activities designed to support the community integration of guests. To date, local church networks have not directly accessed any of the community integration funding.

Community Consultation

38. Since the start of the HfU scheme in March 2022, Refugee Resettlement Officers within the Communities team have been informally consulting with community stakeholders, sponsors and guests to identify gaps in provision for Ukrainian guests specifically. The outcome of this informal consultation suggests that the main priorities of Ukrainian guests are:
 - English language acquisition support
 - Securing paid employment
 - Securing privately rented accommodation

Proposed Spend

39. The Communities team propose to undertake further scoping activity and develop a spending proposal for the grant funding which:
 - a. Attempts to support the delivery of the scheme in partnership with internal teams
 - b. Aligns to the priorities of Ukrainian guests as identified during initial community consultation activity

Climate change and air quality

40. The work noted in this report has no overall impact on the Councils Carbon emissions and the wider Climate Emergency and sustainability targets of the Council.

Equality and diversity

41. Any proposals for expenditure will support the Councils objectives around promoting equality and diversity. The funding made available to local authorities will assist with the costs of supporting Ukrainian guests and ensure inclusivity by allowing guests to participate in activities which encourage the development of personal resilience.
42. An impact assessment will be completed once proposals for expenditure have been fully scoped.

Risk

43. All project proposals will be scoped accordingly, and risks identified through appropriate policies and procedures.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

44. There has been significant amounts of income received in respect of Homes for Ukraine in a relatively short period of time. Systems and processes are now established providing a better insight into how best to utilise these resources. The establishment of this budget, fully funded by grant, will allow for detailed spending plans to be drawn up and implemented.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

45 The proposal is acceptable provided the distribution is undertaken in accordance with the terms of the grant.

Background documents

45. There are no background documents.

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