

Report to: Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Date of meeting: 18 August 2022

By: Director of Adult Social Care and Health

Title: Homes for Ukraine (HfU) East Sussex employability programme

Purpose: To request the use of HfU funding to support Ukrainian guests and other refugee groups into employment and training in East Sussex.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Lead Member is recommended to:

1. approve the proposed programme for supporting Ukrainian guests and other refugee groups into employment in East Sussex as set out in Appendix 1:
2. agree spend of £491,675 of the HfU Grant for this programme which will be delivered by commissioning a partnership of expert community sector organisations; and
3. authorise the Employment and Skills Team to implement the programme.

1. Background

1.1 East Sussex County Council (“ESCC”) is coordinating the Homes for Ukraine (HfU) programme and associated HfU Grant to support Ukrainians with integration into life while in the UK. The funding is not ringfenced, and consequently, although primarily focused on Ukrainian beneficiaries, our programmes can be extended to support other refugee and vulnerable groups where there are related needs and pressures.

1.2 ESCC has started to commission or provide a range of provision to support Ukrainians arriving in the county. This includes:

- Funding 3 Voluntary Action groups, to deliver direct services and administrate a Community Support Fund to support community integration and a range of wellbeing needs.
- Three ‘refugee buddy’ organisations covering East Sussex to help refugees with accessing services and conversational English.
- East Sussex Mediation Alliance has been funded to offer mediation of host and guest relations.
- BHT Sussex operate an existing Floating Support Service in East Sussex and have been commissioned to offer a dedicated sustainment and move on service to Ukrainians
- Laptops with data gifted to each family to support services access, learning and communication.

1.3 As at 27 July 2022 there were 1147 Ukrainian guests currently in East Sussex in 487 sponsor homes. A further 445 Ukrainians are already matched to an additional 178 sponsor homes, and we are anticipating their arrival. This is a total of 1592 Ukrainians matched with 665 sponsors. 57% of Ukrainian families or groups entering under the HfU scheme include

dependent children. An additional number of Ukrainians have entered the UK including East Sussex on the Ukraine Family Scheme (numbers are not known).

- 1.4 The Homes for Ukraine visa enables Ukrainians to stay in the UK for up to 3 years, spending an initial 6-12 months living with their sponsors/hosts. After this initial period of sponsorship, Ukrainians will need to be able to live independently and will need to be economically independent to move on from their hosts in a planned way. To enable this, there is clearly a need to support adults with finding work, which will in turn increase their ability to access stable accommodation.
- 1.5 It is estimated that a significant proportion of hosts may not be able to support their guests beyond six months, and unless guests can be supported into employment and independent living, this will place considerable pressure on ESCC and District and Borough housing teams and budgets. September 2022 will start to see the initial six-month hosting period reach a conclusion for the first arrivals in the UK, with most host families reaching this milestone in autumn and winter 2022.
- 1.6 The number of Ukrainians living in the rural areas of East Sussex will add some additional barriers to work and learning - such as transport and lack of local services (training providers, job centres, childcare facilities etc) and lower availability of jobs.
- 1.7 ESCC has had funding confirmed of £9.3m, and we expect further funding relating to future arrivals of £6.6m at £10.5k per guest. Of this, £5.6m is either spent or committed currently, leaving a balance of £10.3m. In addition, we expect to receive ring-fenced funding for host payments and education.

2. Supporting information

- 2.1 ESCC needs to introduce a programme that can support new arrivals from the Ukraine, and from other refugee groups, into work and training, as they feel ready to do so, with many Ukrainians expressing an intention to settle locally and a desire to enter the job market. This programme should work in conjunction with other provision currently being funded via HfU to offer cohesive assistance across all needs of the cohort. For example, the delivery of the BHT Sussex sustainment and move on service will particularly benefit from employability support to help people develop the confidence to access employment and independent accommodation.
- 2.2 The programme needs to be county-wide, cover the rural and urban areas proportionate to need and location of Ukrainian guests and other cohorts of refugees.
- 2.3 The programme needs to include engagement activity, initial skills and work assessments and the creation of individual work and learning plans, support with employability and job search, and triage to other services that can offer specialist provision including language support. The proposed delivery programme is detailed in Appendix 1. Translation and interpreting costs are also factored into the proposal, with a view to recruiting Ukrainian guests into these roles where possible.
- 2.4 The programme will be commissioned via grant funding drawing on the expertise and reach of local community sector organisations who are specialist at offering support into work.

They will support Ukrainian guests and other refugees to access other funded provision such as National Careers Service support or Adult Education Budget funded learning.

- 2.5 The delivery of the programme will take into consideration the wide variety of jobs available in East Sussex, particularly those where there are known job vacancies for example in adult social care roles, construction, and our local visitor economy. These roles offer an opportunity for adults to develop their work experience and language skills prior to progressing into further roles should they choose to do so.
- 2.6 For example, this programme will link into the ESCC recruitment team proposals which explore the opportunities to engage Ukrainians and refugees in ESCC vacancies through direct recruitment processes.
- 2.7 This employability offer can also help Ukrainians and other refugees to access the local independent sector social care sector. As at 2020/21 there were 19,000+ social care jobs in East Sussex, 84% with independent sector. In 2020/21 the turnover rate in social care jobs in East Sussex was 27.8% (4,600 leavers) and the vacancy rate was 4.6% (800 jobs). We expect the 21/22 turnover and vacancy figures to increase. Crucially, the workforce shortages mean that the independent sector is struggling to meet demand, which can result in delays in the provision of care, especially in more rural areas of the County.
- 2.8 Until the end of March 2023, Ukrainian guests will be referred into the Moving on Up (COMF funded programme) for additional support and should they move into a job, will have access on a needs assessed basis, to an incentive payment of up to £1500, to support them into independent and stable accommodation. This incentive payment can be used towards the purchase of key equipment (fridge, cooker, beds etc). Take-up of this offer by Ukrainian guests will be monitored by the Moving on Up scheme and should it prove effective, a paper will be put to DMT in February 2023, seeking a budget to enable the continuation of this incentive payment for Ukrainians who access work and accommodation. This programme is only available to those who are vulnerably housed, so other refugee groups who have secure tenancy agreements are not able to access it.
- 2.9 The programme will be carefully monitored with support to individuals and progress into learning and work tracked and reported against at quarterly intervals. Programme delivery, capacity and effectiveness will be evaluated on an ongoing basis and can be reviewed and improved as it develops.

3. Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The HfU Programme leads have worked with the Employability and Skills Team Manager to develop a programme to address the needs of Ukrainians and other refugee cohorts who wish to work while residing in East Sussex.
- 3.2 It is recommended that the Lead Member considers the appended delivery proposal, and:
 - Approves the appended proposal (Appendix 1) which outlines the suggested programme for supporting Ukrainian guests and other refugees into employment in East Sussex
 - Agrees the spend of £491,675 of HfU Grant for this programme which will be delivered by commissioning a partnership of expert community sector organisations
 - Delegates programme oversight to the Employment and Skills Team.

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Appendix: Homes for Ukraine Employability proposal