

Report to: Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Date of meeting: 18 July 2023

By: Director Adult Social Care and Health

Title: Homes for Ukraine – Extension of Support into Work Scheme

Purpose: To provide the rationale for extending the Support into Work Scheme currently being delivered as part of the Homes for Ukraine Programme

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1) Approve the proposal to extend the Support into Work Scheme for 12 months from October 2023 to October 2024; and
 - 2) Approve the allocation of £778k from the Homes for Ukraine Grant to fund this proposal.
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1 Background

- 1.1 The Homes for Ukraine (HfU) Scheme was launched by central Government in March 2022, and since then East Sussex County Council (ESCC) has worked in close partnership with District & Borough Councils, Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) partners and commissioned providers to deliver a range of projects and programmes to support Ukrainian guests now living in East Sussex.
- 1.2 The Support into Work Scheme is a key element of the support offered to Ukrainian refugees in the county and contributes to a number of the key strategic objectives of the HfU Programme, namely Employment & Education, Language, and Independence & Wellbeing.
- 1.3 The Support into Work Scheme (“the Scheme”) received £535k from the HfU Grant (“the Grant”) for its first year of operation, and at the time of writing 357 Ukrainian guests have received support since November 2022.
- 1.4 This proposal requests a 12-month extension to the Scheme and includes an increase in funding from the first year’s allocation. The additional funding requested is £778k to extend the scheme to October 2024.
- 1.5 A 12-month extension would enable the Scheme to continue to support the 357 Ukrainian guests as it has so far, and to increase its capacity, allowing access to the scheme for a wider cohort of refugees and asylum seekers, in particular those already living in East Sussex who are eligible for the Government’s fast track ‘streamlined asylum process’, now in operation. More information on this cohort is provided below.
- 1.6 If approved, this proposal would be fully funded from the Grant and there are sufficient funds remaining from the Grant to support this proposal. The Grant is un-ringfenced and is provided to ESCC by central Government for the purposes of supporting Ukrainian refugees and their hosts. To date, the Grant has funded a range of support delivered through ESCC services, District & Borough Council services, VCSE partners and commissioned providers, all of which are designed to help Ukrainian guests access the support they need, maintain stable housing arrangements, gain language skills, access employment and integrate into their East Sussex communities. The Grant has also enabled capacity building among partner organisations to manage the delivery of support programmes thereby relieving pressure on statutory services.

2 Supporting information

- 2.1 The Scheme provides employability provision to refugees and Ukrainians currently residing in East Sussex. This project was approved and started in October 2022 for 12 months. The proposal is to continue the project for an extra year, building on the work to date, and giving time to upskill those who join the programme in the summer of 2023.
- 2.2 In East Sussex approximately 1600 Ukrainians have arrived as part of the HfU scheme, with additional but unknown numbers arriving through the Ukraine Family Scheme visa. In addition, there is a significant and growing population of refugees and asylum seekers in East Sussex and all indications are that numbers will continue to rise.
- 2.3 In addition to rising numbers of asylum seekers in East Sussex, the Government has committed to fast tracking asylum applicants this year towards refugee status to clear the backlog of asylum applications. It is unclear how many will be granted refugee status via the 'streamlined asylum process' but once granted status there will be no housing provided to this cohort and they will have 28 days to vacate premises. To prevent street homelessness, it is essential to support this group with English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and employability skills before they are given notice. Otherwise, new refugees are likely to place an additional strain on current services especially the homelessness services and on our VCSE sector.
- 2.4 This proposal makes provision to provide the support required to give c.250 asylum seekers/refugees 'preventative' ESOL, employability and job search support, in addition to the continuing support already offered to Ukrainian refugees. The current programme is forecast to provide support to 1000 Ukrainian refugees, of which the programme aims to support 600 into work. The Scheme presents us with a key opportunity to reach these additional cohorts with proactive and preventive support.
- 2.5 The Scheme is delivered by a partnership of three community sector and statutory sector organisations, (Sussex Community Development Association (SCDA), People Matter and the Refugee Employment Project (REP)). They use their employability training and support experience, hired Ukrainian translators and employer engagement teams to support the project participants with advice and guidance in seeking work. As well as job brokerage support the programme offers careers advice and guidance, job search support, mentoring, CV writing, confidence building, UK work culture training and understanding employability skills and expectations (time keeping, confidentiality, dressing to work, appropriate attitude etc), job matching, benefits calculations, voluntary opportunities, travel advice, interview skills, Right to Work advice and other appropriate support related to employability.
- 2.6 Engagement activity takes place through Ukrainian hubs across East Sussex, jobs fairs, community events and job centres. Working with other HfU funded projects, Scheme partners are able to ensure that positive referral pathways are established to housing support services.
- 2.7 If extension funding is approved the project will be led and managed by the Employability and Skills team within ESCC. The services will be procured via Grant contracts which would be extended. The project is currently managed via minuted bi-weekly steering group meetings which monitor progress against targets. Targets are reported to the HfU Programme Board. The Steering Group undertakes ongoing evaluation and is continuously improving delivery as it learns more about how best to meet the needs of the cohort. Lessons learned and project improvements are discussed at each Steering Group meeting.

Finance

- 2.8 The costs of the current contract and the proposed extension for the period 1 October 2023 to 1 October 2024 total £1.313m and are profiled as per the table below.

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Current contract	0.265	0.270	-	0.535
Proposed extension	-	0.388	0.390	0.778
Total	0.265	0.658	0.390	1.313

2.9 The costs of the current contract and extension are affordable within the funding resources which are available to the HfU Programme. The table below sets out forecasts of funding and planned expenditure for the HfU programme in 2023/24 and 2024/25. The forecasts include the costs of current contracts which have been committed in both years and also the costs of the proposed contract extension for the Scheme.

	2023-24	2024-25
	Forecast	Forecast
	£m	£m
Funding		
b/f from previous year	(11.630)	(7.893)
Forecast Tariff Income	(2.468)	-
Adjustments re actual income	0.807	-
	<u>(13.291)</u>	<u>(7.893)</u>
Expenditure		
Guest Payments	0.047	-
Host Payments	0.740	-
Capacity Building Grants	0.087	-
Staffing	0.858	0.858
Extension – Support to Work	0.388	0.390
Other Contracts & Services	3.199	0.649
Homelessness	0.079	-
	<u>5.397</u>	<u>1.897</u>
Funding c/f	<u>(7.893)</u>	<u>(5.996)</u>

2.10 Total expenditure in 2023/24 is currently projected to be £5.397m which would give an unspent balance of £7.893m against forecast income. This funding is expected to be carried forward into 2024/25 under the terms of the Grant.

3 Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The Scheme has already delivered significant benefits to the Ukrainian cohort within East Sussex and is meeting a need not met elsewhere. The proposed extension to and expansion of the scheme would enable these benefits to continue to be delivered to the original cohort, and to provide much needed support to additional groups. It would also support ongoing relationship development with local employers, supporting further job opportunities for the eligible Ukrainian guests, and continue to enable greater independence and wellbeing among these groups, which in turn contributes to relieving pressure on statutory services within the county and District & Borough Councils.

3.2 The Lead Member is recommended to:

1) Approve the proposal to extend the Scheme for 12 months from October 2023 to October 2024; and

2) Approve the allocation of £778k from the Grant to fund this proposal.

MARK STAINTON

Director Adult Social Care and Health

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LOCAL MEMBERS

None.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.