

Report to: Lead Member for Adult Social Care & Health

Date of meeting: 23 July 2024

By: Director Adult Social Care and Health

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

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

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Lead Member is recommended to approve the proposal to extend the Support into Work programme for 12 months from October 2024 to October 2025 funded from the Homes for Ukraine grant

1 Background

1.1 The Homes for Ukraine (HfU) Programme was launched by central Government in March 2022, and 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 programme is a key element of the support offered to Ukrainians in the county and contributes to key strategic objectives of the HfU Programme, by supporting access to employment, training, English language learning, and independence (including independent living/accommodation).

1.3 The Support into Work programme received £535,000 of the HfU grant funding for its first year of operation and a further £778,000 for its second year of operation.

1.4 This proposal requests a 12-month extension to the current Support into Work programme for a third year, from October 2024 to October 2025, at a cost of £500,000 which it is proposed to take from unspent HfU funds. Support into Work, as with other HfU services, are starting to plan a gradual tapering of support as more Ukrainians reach full independence, but the need to support Ukrainians into and within employment remains a high priority. More detail is provided below.

1.5 This proposal would be fully funded from the unallocated balance of the HfU grant. Whilst the grant is not ringfenced, it is provided to ESCC by central Government for the purposes of supporting Ukrainian visa-holders and their hosts. Support into Work helps the local authority meet these objectives and its responsibilities under the HfU [grant conditions](#), which includes an expectation to offer support into employment.

1.6 This proposal has been consulted on with partner organisations from the statutory and VCSE sector who work with ESCC on the HfU programme, and the cross-departmental ESCC HfU Steering Group, who support the proposal. It was also approved in principle by the multi-agency HfU Programme Board on 14 May 2024 through a business case.

2 Supporting information.

2.1 Support into Work provides employability provision to Ukrainians currently residing in East Sussex. This project was approved and started in October 2022 for 24 months. The proposal is to continue the project for an extra year, building on the work to date, and continuing to support Ukrainians in the county as well as new arrivals.

2.2 In East Sussex approximately 1870 Ukrainians have arrived as part of the HfU Programme, with an additional but unknown number arriving through the Ukraine Family Scheme visa (this scheme has now closed for new applicants). Arrivals continue each month, albeit a reduced number, with 93 people arriving in the first 5 months of 2024. Total arrivals under the HfU are by far

the largest population entering East Sussex under any refugee, asylum, or humanitarian route. Since a national policy change, new arrivals from 19 February 2024 now receive an 18-month HfU visa, instead of 3 years, which means they will need to achieve independence (including employment) more quickly and will therefore need early access to employability support.

2.3 Support into Work 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 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 for 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.

2.4 Engagement activity takes place through Ukrainian hubs across East Sussex, jobs fairs, community events and job centres. Working with other HfU funded projects, Support into Work partners ensure that positive referral pathways are established to other services, as part of a comprehensive wraparound support offer.

2.5 Achieving sustainable employment is a key element of the HfU Programme and wraparound offer. Employment enables people to achieve independence from HfU services, afford independent accommodation, and reduces dependency on wider services. Dedicated employability support is essential for this cohort for a range of reasons, including the demographics of the cohort particularly the number of families made up of one parent and children.

2.6 The Support into Work programme offers comparable or better value for money than other employment support schemes. At the end of March 2024, the programme had supported 683 people including 265 people who had gained employment. This is a cost per participant of £1291 and a cost per 'into work' outcome of approximately £3,500, which compares favourably to national schemes such as the Universal Support programme (£4,000 per participant) and Restart (£2,200 per participant – figures on into work numbers are not available for these two schemes).

2.7 There is no available alternative to Support into Work for Ukrainian guests; other programmes focus on other cohorts (e.g. Restart, Work & Health programme), and/or do not have ongoing funding or capacity (e.g. Moving on Up).

2.8 The Support into Work programme and the overall HfU Programme in East Sussex is a success; with positive outcomes being achieved in terms of employment, housing, English language, integration, education, and many other areas. There are low levels of Ukrainians in temporary accommodation and high numbers have moved on to the private rented sector – this is underpinned by supporting people proactively into employment.

2.9 If the extension proposal is approved the project will be led and managed by the Employability and Skills team within ESCC. The services are procured via Grant contracts which would be extended. The project is currently managed via a monthly HfU Steering Group which monitors progress and performance is 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 learnt and project improvements are discussed at each Steering Group meeting.

3 Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 Support into Work has already delivered significant benefits to the Ukrainian cohort within East Sussex and is meeting a need not met in another way. It is part of a comprehensive programme of wraparound support which achieves good outcomes for Ukrainians and ensures they are supported towards independence and wellbeing and not dependent on other stretched local services.

3.2 The extension of the programme will enable more Ukrainian residents to access employment and associated income which, in turn increases, their ability to live independently including funding their own accommodation and reduce the likelihood of needs and costs presenting elsewhere in the system, which to date the local authority has been able to minimise.

3.3 The Lead Member is recommended to approve the proposal to extend the Support into Work programme for 12 months from October 2024 to October 2025 funded from unspent HfU grant funding.

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All Members.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None