

Report to: **Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability**

Date: **28 November 2022**

By: **Director of Children's Services**

Title of report: **Mental health & wellbeing offer for Ukrainian children and young people**

Purpose of report: **To seek the approval of the Lead Member for the use of Homes for Ukraine (HfU) funding to provide a social prescribing programme to support mental health and emotional wellbeing of Ukrainian children and young people in East Sussex.**

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***RECOMMENDATIONS: The Lead Member is recommended to:***

- 1. approve the allocation of £303,820 of the Homes for Ukraine grant to provide a mental health and emotional wellbeing programme for Ukrainian children and young people as set out in the report;**
  - 2. to note that this work will include alignment with Holiday Activity and Food programme and the broader development of social prescribing approaches in the county, and;**
  - 3. Delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services to ensure monitoring requirements and the conditions of the grant funding are met.**
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## **1 Background**

1.1 458 school-age Ukrainian children and young people (CYP) have been placed in East Sussex schools (as of 7 September 2022) as part of the Homes for Ukraine (HfU) programme. A recent ONS Survey suggests that 2/3 of Ukrainian families intend to stay in the UK.

1.2 Given the trauma that has been experienced by many Ukrainians, this proposal seeks to provide support for their emotional wellbeing and mental health through a preventative offer, which will also reduce pressure on specialist services and long-term costs.

1.3 Currently, there is no data regarding the mental health and emotional wellbeing needs of Ukrainian CYP. It is known they have experienced trauma which is being observed by schools and other East Sussex County Council (ESCC) services. The [Mental Health Foundation](#) (MHF) states that 20% of adolescents experience a mental health problem in any given year. NHS Sussex Commissioners for Children and Young People's Mental Health estimate this will be much higher amongst Ukrainian CYP, based on UNHRC reports on the impact on global forced migration due to conflict. It is estimated by ESCC and the NHS that the need is approximately 50% of the cohort (229/458 CYP). Anecdotal evidence from schools, conversations with the Admissions and Customer Relations teams, and feedback from Ukrainian host families and the Ukrainian Advisory Group supported this figure.

1.4 The NHS has identified 5 steps (link [here](#)) to mental wellbeing. It is considered that this social prescribing proposal will directly support with the first three of these: enabling CYP to (1) connect meaningfully with their peers and others in their local community, (2) take part in physical activity and (3) develop new skills.

## 2 Proposal and supporting information

2.1 The proposal is to provide support from youth focused social prescribers to Ukrainian CYP who will encourage participation in positive activities in the community for up to a year. Eligible CYP will be identified as those experiencing mild to moderate emotional difficulties. Four social prescribers, funded through the programme, will work directly with eligible young people and their families to establish whether social prescription is the most appropriate form of support and, if so, to assist them to identify suitable activity provision.

2.2 These funded positive activities could be referred into by existing mental health support and referral processes (e.g. CAMHS, i-Rock, Mental Health Support Teams in Schools, School Nurses etc) as well as by other partners and services, e.g. SPOA, schools, churches, voluntary organisations, GPs.

2.3 The positive activities will be delivered through purchasing activities from existing providers, drawing on the expertise and reach of local community sector organisations. Many of these organisations have previously been funded through the Holiday Activities and Food (“HAF”) programme, and who have experience of working with vulnerable CYP and those with mental health and emotional wellbeing (“MHEW”) needs.

2.4 The benefits of the programme will include:

- A positive impact on the emotional wellbeing and mental health of Ukrainian CYP. A project team will be established to deliver and evaluate the programme. The impact will be measured using a combination of service user feedback from participating children and families as well as by reviewing the impact on demand for specialist support services.
- Demand management by reducing the number of referrals for specialist services and ensuring timely preventative interventions.
- Developing capacity and the assets in the community to better support CYP.
- Improving knowledge about the current MHEW services and clinical pathways and creating an alternative pathway so CYP can get earlier help.
- Improve awareness of and confidence in an asset-based social prescribing approach amongst MHEW services, GPs, schools, Vol sec, and service users.

2.5 The full cost of this programme will be £303,820. Appendix 1 details the proposed programme budget.

2.6 This proposal directly supports the following priorities in the [Council Plan](#).

### **Driving sustainable economic growth**

- Supporting local infrastructure – Funding local providers to deliver sessions.
- Supporting children to engage with education – Positive activities to support CYP with MHEW needs at an early stage and enable them to continue attending school.

### **Keeping vulnerable people safe**

- Support for vulnerable people – Providing early intervention to a specific cohort identified as vulnerable (Ukrainian CYP with MHEW needs).

### **Helping People Help Themselves**

- Putting people first – Social prescription model ensures a person-centred approach tailored to the needs of each young person.
- Local mutual support systems – Place-based approach to support Ukrainian CYP and their families to engage with local activities and organisations.

### **Making Best use of resources now and for the future**

- Working in partnership – Proposal developed in partnership with NHS. Activities to be delivered through a network of local partner organisations.
- Value for money – Early intervention to support low-level MHEW needs to prevent future involvement of specialist services.
- Maximising funding – Utilise HfU funding allocation whilst this is available.

### **Consultation**

2.7 This proposal has been developed in partnership with NHS Sussex (commissioners and providers) and ESCC Public Health.

2.8 This proposal has already been considered and supported by the HfU Programme Board on 3 October. As it was above the £250,000 delegated threshold for them to authorise the funding, this report is now seeking Lead Member approval.

2.9 The proposal was reviewed by the Ukrainian Advisory Group on 5 October 2022. The group, consisting of Ukrainian parents/carers, described it “a really wonderful proposal”, welcoming the recognition of the impact of war and trauma on their children, and this resultant social prescribing proposal to support their wellbeing. They particularly appreciated the opportunity this presents for their children to develop meaningful, local connections with other children, families, and groups. No concerns were raised.

2.10 As a comparator to a similar model of funded positive activities in the community: 80 Ukrainian children attended the summer HAF Programme. 100% of parents said their children enjoyed it and made new friends. 40% said their children were calmer, happier and more settled at home.

2.11 All those consulted about this social prescribing proposal considered that this is an achievable proposal model (as demonstrated by the HAF Programme) and one which is not reliant on specialist mental health practitioners. They recognised the ongoing benefits in terms of building community assets and better partnership working.

## **3 Conclusion and reasons for recommendations**

3.1 All stakeholders recognise a need to support Ukrainian CYP with MHEW needs.

3.2 The proposal takes the form of an asset-based social prescribing programme, to enable Ukrainian CYP to be supported and funded to access positive activities in the community.

3.3 This report recommends that the Lead Member:

- 1) Approve the allocation of £303,820 of the Home for Ukraine grant to provide a mental health and emotional wellbeing programme for Ukrainian children and young people as set out in the report.
- 2) Note that this work will include alignment with Holiday Activity and Food programme and the broader development of social prescribing approaches in the county.
- 3) Delegate authority for this funding to the Director of Children’s Services.

**ALISON JEFFERY**  
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LOCAL MEMBERS

As a county-wide programme, this proposal could potentially impact all electoral divisions.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.