

# HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Report

<b>Committee:</b>	Corporate Parenting Board
<b>Date:</b>	5 October 2022
<b>Title:</b>	Homes for Ukraine – Impact on Children in Care Service
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Children’s Services

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### Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Corporate Parenting Board with an overview of the Homes for Ukraine scheme, specifically the impact that this will have on the Children in Care Service.
2. The Homes for Ukraine scheme has recently been opened to applications for children who wish to travel to the UK without their parent or guardian. Although these children will not be Looked After, there is a risk that some of these arrangements may come to an end and there is provision within the scheme to support this. This report will provide more information about this.

### Recommendation(s)

3. That the Corporate Parenting Board note the content of this report.

### Executive Summary

4. On 14 March 2022 the government announced the Homes for Ukraine scheme. The scheme allows members of the public to apply to sponsor Ukrainian nationals who wish to flee the conflict. Ukrainians are issued a 3-year visa, which allows them to enter the UK, access public services (including health, education, and benefits), and secure employment.
5. Initially, applications were accepted from unaccompanied minors, however this was withdrawn and all applications received from unaccompanied minors were put on hold.
6. On 15 July 2022, the government announced that existing applications to the Homes for Ukraine scheme would now be progressed. Also announced were some key differences to the scheme for unaccompanied minors, specifically, the Local Authority would need to assess and approve

the sponsorship arrangement prior to the child's visa being issued. Additionally, the child must have a relationship with their sponsor that pre-exists the start of the conflict. On 10 August 2022, the Home Office opened the scheme to new applicants.

7. The government guidance states that these arrangements will be considered private fostering arrangements where the criteria for this is met, and that all other arrangements need to be treated in a similar manner.
8. The guidance also makes some provision for circumstances where sponsorship arrangements cannot continue, and the financial arrangements in place to support Local Authorities if these children need to become Looked After.

### **Legal status**

9. The Homes for Ukraine guidance relating to unaccompanied minors sets an expectation that all children will receive a service that is comparable to a private fostering service.
10. Private fostering arrangements are care arrangements where a child who is under 16 (or under 18 if disabled) is cared for by an adult who is not their parent or a close family member, defined in the Children Act as a grandparent, brother, sister, aunt or uncle (of full blood, half blood, by marriage or civil partnership) or stepparent.
11. Some unaccompanied minors are likely to meet the criteria for private fostering and will be supported by the relevant provisions. For those who are not, they will be offered an assessment and ongoing support.
12. Children who are in private fostering arrangements are not Looked After children. Their parents retain full parental responsibility and retain full responsibility for their care arrangements.
13. To date, Hampshire has been asked by the Home Office to assess 17 applications and has approved two arrangements.

### **Placement breakdowns**

14. In the event of a sponsorship arrangement breaking down, the guidance states that it is the responsibility of the parents to identify a rematch. The Local Authority is required to assess the new arrangement before the child moves in.
15. The guidance acknowledges that there may be scenarios where a rematch cannot be identified, in which case the child may need to become Looked After. If children in the UK in the Homes for Ukraine scheme become Looked After, they will not be included in the Local Authority's quota of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking children.

16. Some children may be at risk of immediate harm, in which case they may be safeguarded through court proceedings, which may include them becoming Looked After Children by means of an interim or full Care Order (where the Local Authority will share parental responsibility for the child with their parents). The Local Authority is required to notify the Ukrainian Embassy in these circumstances.

### **Financial support**

17. Hosts can claim the optional £350 per month thank you payments, these will continue for up to three years unless the child turns 18 during that time. Children will receive £200 subsistence payment on arrival. The child is included in the Local Authority's numbers for allocation of the grant, which equates to £10,500 per Ukrainian guest.
18. In the event that a child becomes Looked After, the government will provide additional financial support at a rate of £64,150 per child per year (for one year). Once they reach 18, this will be at a rate of £16,850 per care leave for year (for one year).

### **Summary and analysis**

19. The Homes for Ukraine unaccompanied minors scheme is intended to allow children to come to the UK to escape conflict, to be cared for by adults who they know and who know them. Unlike arrangements for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, children who enter on Homes for Ukraine will not immediately become Looked After. However, caring for children who have experienced trauma and who are now separated from their parents or guardians is likely to be a challenging task. This is recognised in the provisions within the scheme to address circumstances where arrangements break down, and children need to become Looked After.
20. It is difficult to anticipate numbers as the scheme has opened to new applications. However, it is hoped that any Ukrainian child who becomes Looked After would be an exception.

### **Finance**

21. No finance issues noted. At this time, there are no Ukrainian children who have become Looked After and, if this occurs, funding arrangements are in place.

### **Performance**

22. No performance issues noted.

## **Consultation and Equalities**

23. No consultation has been undertaken.

## **Other Key Issues**

24. None

## **Any other headings (if required)**

25. None

## **Conclusions**

26. The Homes for Ukraine unaccompanied minors scheme allows Ukrainian parents to make arrangements for their children to live safely and securely with familiar adults in the UK. While in the UK children will have the additional protection of Local Authority involvement throughout the duration of the arrangement, or until the child turns 18. It is anticipated that the majority of these arrangements will be managed successfully through Private Fostering regulations or an equivalent level of service if the criteria is not met and will not impact on the Children in Care service.

27. That said, caring for children who have experienced trauma, both from their experiences in Ukraine and the trauma of being separated from parents, is not an easy task and hosts will require support and guidance from a range of services. It is highly likely that there will be some scenarios where arrangements break down and the child is received into care. It is anticipated that these numbers will be small, so the impact will not be significant. In the event that a child becomes Looked After, the Local Authority will access the financial support available to fund the child's care and support.

**REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:**

**Links to the Strategic Plan**

<b>Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:</b>	No
<b>People in Hampshire live safe, healthy, and independent lives:</b>	Yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:</b>	Yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:</b>	Yes
<b>OR</b>	
<b>This proposal does not link to the Strategic Plan but, nevertheless, requires a decision because:</b> <i>NB: Only complete this section if you have not completed any of the Strategic Plan tick boxes above. Whichever section is not applicable, please delete.</i>	

**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

## EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

### 1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

### 2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

See guidance at <https://hants.sharepoint.com/sites/ID/SitePages/Equality-Impact-Assessments.aspx?web=1>

Insert in full your **Equality Statement** which will either state:

- (a) why you consider that the project/proposal will have a low or no impact on groups with protected characteristics or*
- (b) will give details of the identified impacts and potential mitigating actions*

The Homes for Ukraine unaccompanied minors scheme will not have an impact on protected characteristics. It is a scheme that is open to a specific group of children, and there is additional funding and resources in place to ensure that any barriers to engagement are addressed e.g. language barriers.