

Annex B - 6

Homes for Ukraine funding

Following the launch of the Homes for Ukraine scheme by the government in March 2022, upper tier councils have been in receipt of grant funding relating to the number of guests arriving in their area. This funding was initially provided as a one-off payment at the level of £10,500 per guest and then reduced to £5,900 for arrivals from 1 January 2023 onwards. For eligible minors the tariff will continue at £10,500.

This grant funding is to support Ukrainian guests and their hosts. Oxfordshire residents have been exceptionally welcoming, with Oxfordshire's per-resident population hosting levels been amongst the highest in the country.

In two-tier areas it is a condition of the funding that councils must agree a plan locally to:

- make prompt payments to lower-tier councils in relation to all the services which they provide to guests under the scheme, during the full duration of the scheme, including for services such as homelessness assistance for which lower-tier councils are responsible
- make an immediate payment to lower-tier councils in relation to any upfront costs.

This tariff funding is in addition to separate funding received for education and payments to host households. The Local Authority Housing Fund which aims to reduce the risk of homelessness is received directly by the city and district councils.

Response in Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire's councils, supported by statutory services including Thames Valley Police, OxLEP and the NHS, have organised their Homes for Ukraine response through the Oxfordshire Migration Partnership ('Oxfordshire Silver'). The partnership has moved from an initial focus on basic welfare and safeguarding, to managing the transition of guests into sustainable accommodation through support for employment, skills and access to accommodation.

Working through the Migration Partnership, Oxfordshire councils - represented by their chief executives - agreed an outline allocation of tariff funding early in the scheme. The funding was apportioned based on estimated costs incurred by each council and for specific cross-cutting programmes led by either the county council or by one of the city or district councils, on behalf of all partners.

These schemes have been overseen and managed through the decision making, finance and procurement processes of the relevant organisations.

There is now a need to conclude formal grant agreements for the funding allocated to the city and district councils, which was originally apportioned in outline before the number of Ukrainian guests in Oxfordshire was known. The level of the funding, given the numbers of guests in the county, means that the conclusion of the grant agreements is a key decision for the County Council.

Outline allocations

The allocations in the table below set out how funding has been allocated as at May 2023. Additional funding will be made available from the unallocated budget of £4.1m, according to costs and need, in consultation with district Section 151 officers, and agreed by the County Council's Director of Finance. Expenditure against each element will be reported through the Business Management and Monitoring reports.

Programme element	£ m
Emergency payments	0.4
Wrap around support	0.4
Community Liaison Officers	0.3
Rematching resources (lead authority: Oxford City Council)	0.2
Initial funding allocated to County, City and Districts	5.8
Top-up payments for hosts	1.6
Bus Passes	1.0
Move-On (lead authority: South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils)	6.0
Employment Support (lead authority: Oxfordshire County Council)	1.2
Total allocated funding (May 2023)	16.9
Total tariff funding (May 2023)	21.0
Unallocated funding (May 2023)	4.1

Emergency payments

£0.434m

A £200 payment is made to Ukrainian guests when they arrive at host accommodation in Oxfordshire. This is a one-off 'welcome' payment managed by Oxfordshire County Council.

Wrap around support for Ukrainian guests

£0.368m

Support provided through a contract with a community/voluntary sector provider (currently Asylum Welcome). The wrap around support provides a range of interventions, activities and events to support Ukrainians living in Oxfordshire, as well as helping new arrivals settle in and find their bearings. The support includes: help to access to suitable accommodation, finding employment, supporting volunteering and training opportunities and accessing vital support/health/welfare services.

Community Liaison Officers

£0.320m

These officers are linked to city and district council areas and work closely with the wrap around support provided through the contract above. The officers provide support for Ukrainian hosts and guests in their localities and provide an overview of community services and support.

Rematching resources

£0.158m

Led by a team located in Oxford City Council, this partnership work enables a county-wide approach to prevent Ukrainian guests from becoming homeless by rematching them with hosts, when necessary. This reduces the risk of homelessness and the need for emergency temporary accommodation. By working together across Oxfordshire, this enables strategic policies and processes to be put in place to support consistency across the county.

Administration/discretionary funding

£5.757m

Funding for city, district and county councils to cover the costs of administering the Homes for Ukraine scheme and to provide a fund for discretionary payments. This work delivers the objectives of the Oxfordshire Migration Partnership, which is to ensure a warm welcome for all new arrivals and embrace and support independent living for those staying in the county.

Administration costs include:

- Communications
- Finance/payment provision
- Customer contact centre
- Housing support
- Social care support (adults and children)

An initial payment of £500,000 will be made to each district / city area with additional funding being paid according to costs and need from the unallocated funded.

Top up for hosts payments

£1.600m

Additional funding given to Homes for Ukraine hosts to help with increased winter costs last winter (2022/23), thank hosts for their ongoing participation and incentivise the continuation of hosting arrangements.

On-going additional payment made to hosts as a 'top up' over and above Government-agreed payments – so each sponsor in Oxfordshire received £550 per month. The reason for increasing the payments to all hosts is to encourage on-going hosting arrangements and maintain a consistent payment level through variably national offers.

Government 'standard' payments are £350 a month during the first 12 months of guests stay, increasing to £500 once your guest has been in the UK for 12 months.

Bus passes for Ukrainian guests

£1.029m

A 12-week free bus pass scheme was introduced for Ukrainians guests, to help them travel in Oxfordshire during their first few months in the UK. The initial scheme (introduced in June 2022) was extended by another 12 weeks, so all guests can now apply for free bus passes for a period of up to 24 weeks.

Move on £6.002m

A cross-county team works to ensure the smooth transition of Ukrainian guests from their hosts into independent accommodation.

Led by a team located in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Councils, this partnership work encompasses a range of activities covering:

- Staffing support
- Moving on private rental support
- Moving on guest support
- Moving on Homes for Multiple Occupancy (HMO) license application support.

Employment support £1.212m

This is a new scheme, being led by Oxfordshire County Council, working closely with partners across the county.

Stable employment is critical for Ukrainian guests to be able to access sustainable accommodation and minimise homelessness. The new support includes:

- Preparing for work in the UK
- Into work (including the securing of jobs, childcare, transport)
- Work experience
- Voluntary work
- Training and conversion courses
- Courses for English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and work based ESOL (WBESOL)
- Self-employment
- Information and signposting.

District and city grant agreements

In order to facilitate the programme elements set out above, this report seeks the approval of Cabinet for initial allocations of funding to the city and district councils via a grant agreement (see recommendation e of the main report) to be concluded by the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance.

The initial funding allocation will be as set out in the table below, with further funding as required by each council within the overall Homes for Ukraine envelope, agreed by the Director of Finance on the presentation of a business case, in consultation with city and district council Section 151 Officers.

Initial spending was agreed in outline by the Oxfordshire chief executives in compliance with the funding scheme requirement to passport funding from upper tier to lower tier authorities in two tier areas, as set out above and therefore significant elements of this funding is being provided in retrospect.

Funding element	City	CDC	SODC	VOWH	WODC*
Community Liaison Officers 12 months	50000	50000	50000	50000	0
Community Liaison Officers extention	30000	30000	30000	30000	0
Rematching resources	158000	0	0	0	0
Admin/Discretionary (initially capped at £500k)	500000	500000	500000	500000	500000
Moving on staffing support	0	0	170000	0	0
Moving on Private Rental Support	633000	544000	977000	693000	655000
Total funding	£1,371,000	£1,124,000	£1,727,000	£1,273,000	£1,155,000

*The Community Liaison Officer for WODC is supplied and funded through the Wrap Around Support contract. In other councils the Community Liaison Officer was recruited directly. Therefore, the resource for WODC shows in the table above as £0 for WODC.