

Annex C

Homes for Ukraine funding: to report updated spending and additional allocations

Following the launch of the Homes for Ukraine (HfU) scheme by the UK government in March 2022, upper tier councils have been in receipt of a tariff fund for individual arrivals in their area of responsibility. Funding is provided as a one-off payment at the level of £10,500 per guest, falling to £5,900 for all new arrivals from 1 January 2023. For eligible minors the tariff will continue at £10,500.

This 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, payments to host households and the specific funding to reduce homelessness, including the capital funding through the Local Authority Housing Funding (LAHF), for the city and district councils.

Response in Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire's councils, supported by statutory services including Thames Valley Police, OxLEP and the NHS, organised a Homes for Ukraine response through the Oxfordshire Migration Partnership ('Oxfordshire Silver'). Over the past year, 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 the costs incurred by each council and for specific cross-cutting programmes led by either the county council or by one of the city and 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.

Formal grant agreements for the funding were allocated to the city and district councils, which was apportioned in outline before the volume of Ukrainian guests in Oxfordshire was known – the number of guests drives the tariff funding we receive. The level of the funding, given the numbers of guests in the county, meant that the conclusion of the grant agreements was a key decision. Initial allocations were agreed by Cabinet in July 2023 with further allocation to be agreed by the County Council's Executive Director for Finance and Resources, in consultation with district and city Section 151 officers. This Annex is provided to Cabinet to give an update on further allocations up to January 2024.

Original and additional allocations

The table below presents the original allocations, alongside the new allocations as of January 2024.

Programme element - allocations	Allocation at July 2023 £ m	Allocation at Jan 2024 £ m
Guest payments, DBS etc.	0.6	0.6
Wraparound support	0.4	0.6
Community Liaison Officers	0.3	0.5
Rematching resources (lead authority: Oxford City Council)	0.2	0.4
Funding allocated to County, City and Districts	5.8	7.4
Top-up payments for hosts	1.6	1.8
Bus passes	1.0	1.0
Move-on (lead authority: South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils)	6.0	6.2
Employment and Skills programme (lead authority: Oxfordshire County Council)	1.2	1.6
Football Inclusion Officer (Lead authority: Cherwell)		0.035
Community Grants (Lead authority: Cherwell)		0.050
Aspire Employment Project (Lead authority: OCC)		0.013
Impact Assessment (Lead authority: OCC)		0.020
Total allocated funding (May 2023/ Dec 2023)	16.9	20.2
Total tariff funding (May 2023/ Dec 2023)	21.0	23.0
Unallocated funding (May 2023/ Dec 2023)	4.1	3.0

Guest Payments

£482,600 spend by Jan 2024 – no increase in allocation.

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

Wraparound support for Ukrainian guests

£362,162 spend by Jan 2024 – allocation increased to £0.6m (new contract awarded)

Support provided through a contract with a community/ voluntary sector provider to provide 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 included help to access to suitable accommodation, finding employment, supporting volunteering and training opportunities and accessing vital support/ health/ welfare services. A new one-year contract (option to extend for another year – included in costings) will start in March 2025 and will focus more on signposting to existing services, as well as providing additional health and wellbeing support.

Community Liaison Officers

£229,262 spend by Jan 2024 - allocation increased to £0.5m (resource extended to March 2025)

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

£202,481 spend by Jan 2024 - allocation increased to £0.4m (resource extended to March 2025)

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.

Initial funding allocated for Administration/ discretionary costs

£3,869,077 spend by Jan 2024 – allocation increased to £7.4m resource extended to March 2025)

Funding for city, district and county councils to cover the costs of administering the Homes for Ukraine scheme. 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 was made to each district / city area with additional funding being paid according to costs and need from the unallocated funded.

Top up for host payments

£678,100 spend by Jan 2024 - allocation increased to £1.8 (host top-up payments)

On-going, additional payment made to hosts as a 'top up' over and above Government agreed payments. Each sponsor (host) in Oxfordshire receives £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 guest's stay, increasing to £500 once the guest has been in the UK for 12 months, for a duration of a further 24 months.

System partners have agreed that the locally funded host payment top-ups will continue at least until March 2025 with eligibility in-line with the national scheme.

Bus passes for Ukrainian guests

£769,835 spend by Jan 2024 – no additional allocation

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 could apply for free bus passes for a period of up to 24 weeks. The free bus pass scheme has ended, with individual requests being considered on a case-by-case basis.

Move on: Staffing support and to Private Rented Sector (PRS)

£454,443 spend by Jan 2024 – total allocation is £3.9m (Resource agreed to March 2025)

The Housing Capacity Team cross-county team works to ensure the smooth transition of Ukrainian guests from their hosts into independent accommodation. Led by a team allocated 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.

Whilst current spend is very low there are significant risks related to rising homelessness across all cohort groups and therefore it is essential to have the budget available to reduce the risk of homelessness and support Ukrainians to move into settled accommodation. The cost

Employment support

£464,800 spend by Jan 2024 – increased allocation to £1.6m (if the project is extended to 24 months, rather than current 18 months) – any extension will require approval by Gold (Oxfordshire Chief Executives)

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 Council grant agreements

The additional funding allocation is 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 councils s151 officers.

Initial spending was agreed in outline by Chief Executive's 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	County	City	CDC	SODC	VOWH	WODC
Guest payments, DBS etc.	650312					
Wraparound contract	625495					
Community Liaison Officers 12 months		50000	50000	50000	50000	0
Community Liaison Officers extension		71137	78153	84653	49873	22459
Rematching resources		429330	0	0	0	0
Admin/Discretionary (initially capped at £500k)	3578840	1050000	500000	1019000	670000	500000
Host payment top ups	1800000					
Bus passes	1029000					
Football Inclusion Officer			35000			
Employment and Skills Programme	1600000					
Aspire Employment Project	13060					
Community Grants Scheme			50000			
Impact assessment	20000					
Moving on staffing support		0	0	404000	0	0
Moving on Private Rental Support		633000	544000	977000	693000	655000
Moving on - not yet allocated	2330000					
Total funding	£11,646,707	£2,233,467	£1,257,153	£2,534,653	£1,462,873	£1,177,459

The reason there is a discrepancy between the admin/discretionary allocations is because some districts have budget remaining from their original allocations which will cover their requests for additional funding for staffing to March 2025. Ongoing monitoring will enable us to check whether further funding will be required beyond this.

Finance plan

A finance plan is in place to maintain oversight of the funding and manage payments to the District/City councils.

Draw down of additional funding is via issuing of a letter that acts as an additional schedule to the existing grant agreement.

Quarterly finance reports are presented to the partnership to maintain oversight of the HfU funding.

Additional funding is being sourced via the city and district councils' wider asylum resettlement funds to finance the adaptation of HfU services to support other refugees and asylum seekers in the county, as requested by chief executives. For 2024-25, it was agreed that 20% (£13,326.67 from each district) of the staff costs for the central system support teams - the Programme Management Team based in the County Council, and the Housing Capacity Team based at South & Vale District Councils – will be financed using this resettlement funding. A process has been set up to claim this funding back from the city and district councils through the new round of grant funding letters associated with the HfU agreement – this will avoid the need for a separate 'reverse' grant agreement.