

# **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 7 JULY 2022**

## **Update on the support being provided to the children and families living in Worcestershire as part of the Ukraine Settlement Schemes**

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### **Summary**

1. The Panel is asked to consider an update on the support being provided to the children and families living in Worcestershire as part of the Ukraine Settlement Schemes.
2. The Cabinet Members with Responsibility for Education and for Children and Families, the Director of Education, Early Years, Inclusion and Education Place Planning and the Assistant Director of Communities have been invited to attend this meeting for the discussion.

### **Background**

3. At its meetings on 23 March and 26 April 2022, the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board (OSPB) received an update on the Worcestershire Response to Invasion of Ukraine. The details of the two Schemes available ie the Family Visa Scheme and The Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme are detailed in the OSPB Agenda's dated 23rd March, 2022 and 26th April, 2022.
4. Arising from the discussions at this meeting, a detailed report was requested about the plans to provide support to children and families from Ukraine living in Worcestershire, including plans for school provision in the communities that the Ukrainian guests will be living, any specialist support that schools would be able to access (such as trauma support or language help), and any other support being provided by Worcestershire Children First and partners.

### **Government Funding for School**

5. The Government is providing additional funding to councils to provide education services for children from families arriving from Ukraine under the scheme. The Department for Education (DfE) will allocate funding on a per pupil basis for the three phases of education at the following annual rates:

- Early years (ages 2 to 4) - £3,000
- Primary (ages 5 -11) - £6,580
- Secondary (ages 11-18) - £8,755

6. The DfE will be updating local authorities on the mechanisms by which this will be distributed and when the funding will be available. The date of this update is yet to be confirmed.

## Worcestershire Data

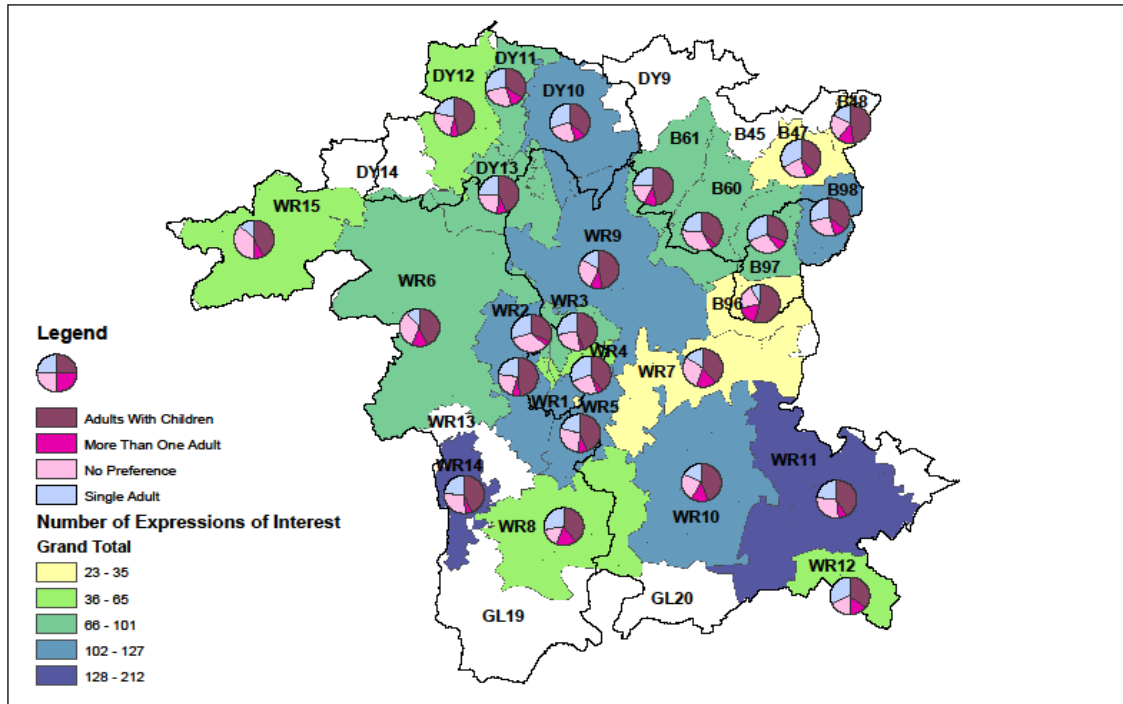
7. Worcestershire had its first data transfer on Tuesday 22 March 2022, the system is updated daily with new sponsors and guests as and when a match has happened. Current information suggests the following breakdown for Sponsors and Guests across Districts (as of 14 June 2022). Numbers change on a daily basis as those households who have expressed an interest find a match with Ukrainian guests.

### 8. Data as at 14/06/2022 inc. number of children split by school stage

Districts	No of Host Properties	No of Expected Guests	No of children – Pre School	No of Children – Primary	No of Children - Secondary
To be confirmed	0	7	1	1	
Bromsgrove	51	128	8	22	16
Malvern Hills	108	273	21	57	32
Redditch	21	43	4	9	1
Worcester City	72	156	3	28	25
Wychavon	136	337	22	51	42
Wyre Forest	42	91	8	16	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>1035</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>122</b>

9. The information on sponsors and guests is shared across County and District colleagues daily via a national data transfer platform (Foundry). All local authorities now have access to this and are able to see the increase in numbers of host properties as well as the visa status (i.e., issued/pending) for Ukraine guests.

10. Worcestershire is now also in receipt of data from central government around the total number of expressions of interest to host Ukrainian guests by Worcestershire household. As mentioned previously, the national figure is around 150,000 and a first look at the data suggests that the total figure for Worcestershire is 2431. Work has now commenced on modelling the potential demand if all these households were to host guests. The map below shows the distribution of expressions of interest and the sponsors preference of age ranges of guests (e.g. Adult with children, single adult, adult group, no preference). District maps are also being produced.



Homes for Ukraine - Expressions of Interest - Snapshot 16 May 2022

## Safeguarding

11. The issue of unaccompanied children arriving into the UK under this scheme is in development. Some local authorities have identified unaccompanied children and, like all Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), they have been accommodated into local authority care. To date, Worcestershire have received only one young person under 18 (almost 18yrs) and interim arrangements were made with the host family.

12. Over recent weeks the Government has been considering options for how Ukrainian minors, who are not travelling with or joining their parent or legal guardian, could be supported to travel to the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Some young people may be travelling with or joining a relative, others may be travelling to stay with a matched sponsor as per the adult scheme.

13. The Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) has been working closely with Government departments on what the process could look like and what additional safeguards would be needed over and above those already required as part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme, before opening it up to young people under the age of 18 and to consider how this fits into the now mandatory National Transfer Scheme.

## Education Update – school places for Ukrainian children

14. All children and young people arriving under these schemes have the right to access education and childcare whilst in the UK. The best place for all children to be educated is in schools, and attending school is vital to help newly arrived children integrate as quickly as possible into the communities in which they are living.

15. Local authorities also have an important role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children. The DLUHC has published guidance for local authorities on the Homes for Ukraine scheme [Government guidance](#), information on access to education and childcare can be found on pages 32-39. For children it is widely accepted that attending school is an important protective factor.

16. To supplement this, the DfE have updated the Gov.uk page on [school access rights for pupils from overseas](#) and have provided some questions and answers to DLUHC's [Homes for Ukraine FAQ page](#). In addition DfE have also provided information in Ukrainian [How do families arriving from Ukraine apply for a school place and childcare? / Як родинам, що приїжджають з України, подавати заяви на отримання місць у школі та допомоги з оплати послуг з догляду за дитиною? - The Education Hub \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

17. The Government's expectation is that if there are school places available in the local area, even if not in the immediate vicinity of the family's home, the local authority will work with families arriving from Ukraine to enable the children to attend school as soon as possible.

18. The Secretary of State for Education has stated local authorities should be looking to provide places and, where necessary, use the flexibilities to admit above published admission number (PAN) and exceed the infant class size limit, as well as using the in-year Fair Access Protocol. The School Admissions Code applies to the admission to school of Ukraine arrivals, in the same way as it does to all other children. Local authorities have a duty to support local parents in choosing schools. DfE, are therefore looking to local authorities to support refugees with:

- information on where schools have vacancies; and
- how to apply.

19. In Worcestershire access to information and the admission application process is being supported by Here2Help. Support to assist with admissions is available via School Admissions on 01905 844 111 or email at [schooladmissions@worcchildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:schooladmissions@worcchildrenfirst.org.uk) The WCF website has information in relation to how to make an application for anyone arriving in the county, that requires a school place. In addition, anyone contacting the Worcestershire Hub in relation to School Admissions, on 01905 822 700, are signposted to WCF, if the query is not something Customer Service Advisors can answer from their extensive School Admissions knowledge base. The School Admissions Team, have a designated placement officer for each geographical area of the county who can support sponsors, families and schools through the process. The Worcestershire Hub have the specific contact details of individuals and can direct calls to where they need to go.

20. When the parents of any child, apply for a school place, admission authorities should aim to notify parents of the outcome of an application for a school within 10 school days and that they must do so within 15 school days. Where there are no school places within a reasonable distance of the child's home, the Local Authority (LA) should use its fair access protocol to place them within 20 school days.

21. Parents who are refugees from Ukraine have the same rights as any other families living within the UK to a school place for their child. This means that they have a right to express a preference for a school rather than their children being placed in schools they may not want them to attend which have vacancies. Local authorities should therefore advise these families where vacancies exist and how to apply for a school.

22. If no schools within a reasonable distance of a child's home have vacancies or are not able to admit more pupils, the local authority should place those children under its in-year fair-access protocol, in the same way it will place all other hard to place children. A school place must be allocated under the protocol for all children referred to it within 20 school days. Arrangements should be made for the child to start at the school as soon as possible.

### Applications to Date

23. DfE have collected from every local authority across England, data collections in relation to overseas arrivals, the data collected so far is in relation to the period 1st September 2021 to 27th May 2022. Thereafter, data is being returned on a monthly basis. The table below, Table A, shows the range of school applications received.

**Table A**

	<b>Afghanistan</b>	<b>Hong Kong</b>	<b>Ukraine</b>	<b>Other Overseas</b>
Primary Applications Received	33	12	102	234
Secondary Applications Received	12	8	77	140
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>374</b>

24. As of 14 June 2022, a total of 214 applications have been received from Ukraine arrivals. 201 children have been offered a school place, and 13 applications are currently being processed, having been received in the last few days. Table B below shows by district council area the offers of school places:

**Table B**

<b>District</b>	<b>Number of Offers Primary</b>	<b>Number of Offers Secondary</b>	<b>Pending Applications</b>	<b>Total</b>
Bromsgrove	13	10	2	25
Malvern Hills	24	9	0	33
Redditch	7	0	0	7
Worcester City	28	20	3	51
Wychavon	47	28	8	83
Wyre Forest	9	5	1	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>214</b>

## Fair Access

25. In certain areas across the county, and in some year groups, there are limited places available in schools. Where the local authority has not been able to offer a place within a reasonable distance, then a referral to Fair Access is made. Fair Access panel meetings are usually held once each half term. However, because it is vital to help newly arrived children integrate as quickly as possible into the communities in which they are living, requests have been made virtually, prior to meetings.

26. In terms of the number of Ukraine arrivals, that have been referred for action under Fair Access, to date, there have been 2 referrals, both of which were successfully placed and are now on roll in schools.

## Support in Schools

27. WCF continue to update schools using the Education Bulletin, on any information released by DfE. Schools have been provided with access to resources to support children in schools. This includes the following support that is available for any child and can also be used to support Ukraine arrivals:

- Free Training to become a Trauma Informed and Attachment Aware Setting.
- Transport Assistance where eligible.
- Language support, through the WCF Learning Support Team.
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) for post-16 and adult learning, community based with funding support.
- Early Help Offer.
- Access to Oak National Academy, which has rolled out an auto-translate function across all 10,000 of its online lessons.
- Uniform costs, if families are struggling to afford uniform, schools can support with costs.

28. In addition, the following resources are also available to support Ukraine arrivals with schools provided with access to resources to support children in schools:

- Free School Meals for all Ukraine arrivals.
- Ukraine Culture Briefing Sessions for schools.
- Support to access remote education during the pandemic has been extended to those Ukrainian pupils who need laptops.
- Access to Ukrainian learning materials and the Ukrainian curriculum, to compliment Ukrainian pupils' education.
- Ukrainian Educational Materials to support both pupils and families.
- Access to Twinkl, English/Ukrainian language resources.

## Early Years

29. Government funds early education entitlements (free hours of childcare) for parents of young children:

30. All parents of 3 and 4-year-olds can access 15 free hours of childcare per week, regardless of their immigration status or whether they are working. Eligible working parents of 3 and 4-year-olds can access an additional 15 hours of childcare, known as the '30 Hours' entitlement. Disadvantaged 2-year-olds may be eligible to access 15 free hours of childcare.

31. Children arriving in the UK through the Ukraine Family Scheme or the Homes for Ukraine (sponsorship) Scheme will be able to access the Department for Education's free early education entitlements if they meet the existing eligibility criteria.

## Wider Support

32. **Cultural awareness and education sessions** – The Council's Adult Learning Team are running sessions for Officers (Districts, County Council, wider partners inc. schools) and Sponsors on cultural awareness. These have been well received. Further sessions when scheduled will be able to be booked using this link - [Homes for Ukraine - Culture Briefing for Sponsors \(worcestershire.gov.uk\)](https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/homes-for-ukraine-culture-briefing-for-sponsors)  
For more information, contact Here2Help via [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/here2help](https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/here2help)

33. The Council's Learning Services Team are currently in a process of developing a number of different activities for guests including English classes. All courses will be promoted on the Council's website here: [Adult Learning Courses \(worcestershire.gov.uk\)](https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/adult-learning-courses). As above, for more information, contact Here2Help.

34. **Accessing the NHS** - The health guide covers resources to help both Guests and Sponsors to make the most of the NHS services available in the county. The guide can be accessed online [Health Guide](#) and sponsors are being encouraged to use this guide to support guests. There is ongoing conversation around how to manage demand on services including mental health support.

35. **Bus Travel** – The County Council is issuing free bus passes to Ukraine Guests for their first three months of stay in Worcestershire.

36. **Opportunities to connect** – Events are being organised in local areas to bring together guests that have arrived. For example, a Connect Cafe was held at Kidderminster Library for Ukrainian families and their sponsors on Friday 27th May from 9:30 - 11:30. This was a chance to connect but also for guests to see what the children's sessions are like and whether it is something they'd like to come to again.

37. Information is being gathered of **local support**, in addition to the support given by the County Council and its partners, that may be available for when the Guests arrive. The already well established [Here2Help service](#) is being utilised to organise and link up those wishing to offer help (individuals and organisations/community groups etc) to those who may need help or advice. Communications have been published encouraging anyone who feels they are able to support in any way to go through Here2Help to register.

38. **Access to employment** - Ukraine claimants will receive the same support and access to provision as anyone else, and if eligible, they should be referred to relevant support to help them into work. There are currently quite a few employers who are sending through vacancies where they are welcoming applications from Ukraine (and Afghan) communities, and these are being shared with the local job centres. The Way to Work campaign is well under way and focussed on connecting claimants to employers and meeting demand in the labour market. Discussions are also taking place with local recruitment companies (e.g., Hewett Recruitment) who are keen to support Ukraine guests into employment.

39. **Re-matching and supporting sponsor / guest relationships** - Rematching is a new expectation for local authorities using the expression of interest information currently shared from central government. It is expected that re-matching will focus on those most in need and, therefore, only be used where it is unviable or unsafe for the sponsorship relationship to continue. Only those who received a visa through the Homes for Ukraine visa route are eligible for rematching, to ensure that those without family links in the UK are prioritised. Rematching should only take place if one of the following applies:

- a. When the local authority determines it is genuinely not viable or safe for the Ukrainian guest(s) to stay where they are.
- b. Because of failed DBS or accommodation checks.

40. Councils should keep rematches to a minimum, to limit instability for guests and ensure rematching is prioritised for the most pressing situations. If a local authority has a request for a rematch from Ukrainian guests, but does not deem it justified, it is reasonable to turn this down or prioritise cases deemed more pressing. Local authorities are expected to use their judgement in determining whether there has been an irreparable breakdown in sponsorship. Where the Ukrainian guests include children who are already enrolled in school or college, local authorities should prioritise rematches that are as local as possible to the education setting, to ensure continuity of education. Children **must not** be rematched separately to the Ukrainian adult(s) in the existing sponsorship relationship. Within a household with multiple Ukrainian adults, you will be able to rematch part of the adult household if appropriate (i.e., in a Ukrainian household with just two adults, you could rematch just one adult, with the other adult remaining with the existing host, if appropriate). Work continues within Worcestershire to identify solutions for meeting this additional expectation.

## **Purpose of the Meeting**

41. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

- Consider the update and determine whether it would wish to carry out any further scrutiny and
- Agree whether it would wish to make any comments to the Cabinet Members.

## **Contact Point**

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## **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Agenda and Minutes of Cabinet - 24 March 2022.

Agenda and Minutes for the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board - 26 April 2022.

[All agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website here.](#)