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Y Gweinidog Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol
Minister for Social Justice



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref MA/JH-/2496/22

John Griffiths MS
Chair, Local Government and Housing Committee
Senedd Cymru
seneddhousing@senedd.wales

3 August 2022

Dear John,

Thank you for the Local Government and Housing Committee's letter of 13 July and the Committee's commitment to continue to monitor the Welsh Government's response to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine and the arrival of people from Ukraine in Wales.

I would welcome an opportunity to appear in front of the Committee in due course. I was pleased to read that witnesses were generally supportive of our response to date— it has been a Team Wales response, and we will continue to take this approach in the weeks and months to come.

I can confirm that we will give the third sector, and all of our key partners, advance notification about any change to our super-sponsor scheme. We have reviewed our position again and will maintain the pause on new applications until September. I have set this out in a written statement.

You will be aware the Scottish Government has also paused its super-sponsor scheme, taking a similar approach to us – to focus on ensuring everyone who has been issued with a visa has good-quality accommodation and wrap-around support on arrival.

I will now turn to the substantive issues the committee has raised in your letter.

The Home Office publishes data about Ukrainian arrivals in Wales on a weekly basis. At the time of writing, 4,447 Ukrainians sponsored by the Welsh Government or Welsh households have arrived in the UK – more than 2,079 people have arrived via the super sponsor scheme, which is double our initial commitment of supporting 1,000 people. The information is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ukraine-sponsorship-scheme-visa-data-by-country-upper-and-lower-tier-local-authority>

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

It is challenging to provide a timescale for when the remaining visa beneficiaries will arrive in Wales because each individual or family will make their own decision about when they want to travel, based on their own circumstances.

Our Wales Nation of Sanctuary Contact Centre has been contacting all super sponsor beneficiaries to discuss their travel plans. The information this offers is helpful for planning purposes but is, inevitably, incomplete because not all individuals are contactable and not everyone is ready to discuss travel plans. In addition, plans change given the dynamic situation in Ukraine. We have used this information to develop a model which illustrates trajectories for likely arrivals.

People are arriving at an approximate rate of 25 people per day. Modelling suggests the number of applicants to the super sponsor scheme arriving in Wales could reduce significantly towards the end of 2022.

I can confirm that people from Ukraine who have been placed in Welsh Government-arranged initial accommodation – whether that is in a welcome centre or another form of accommodation, such as an hotel or hall of residence – will not be moved on by us to their onward accommodation until it and any host have had checks carried out.

However, we cannot guarantee this will be the case for those people who are arriving under the individual Homes for Ukraine scheme because the timescales involved do not always enable local authorities to undertake and complete all checks before the Ukrainian person arrives. This is the way the UK Government has designed the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

The UK Government has now started to process Homes for Ukraine applications for children and young people under 18 who are either unaccompanied or are travelling with an adult relative who is not their parent or legal guardian. Those children and young people who already had applications in the system will have their visas processed first. New applications from children and young people will be possible from mid-August.

My officials are working closely with local authorities in Wales and their counterparts in the other UK nations to ensure this scheme works effectively and that safeguarding considerations are front and centre. Unfortunately, we cannot progress applications from unaccompanied children to our super sponsor route because the wellbeing needs of these children require well-planned initial and onward accommodation options, which were not in the design of our existing provision. We are currently developing guidance for local authorities.

I meet Lord Harrington, the UK Government Minister for Refugees and Neil Gray MSP, the Scottish Minister with responsibility for the Ukrainian response, on a fortnightly basis and I continue to raise the inconsistent approach the UK Government has applied to the Ukraine Family Scheme.

I continue to push for parity of funding between the Homes for Ukraine and Ukraine Family Scheme and for the same supply of data in respect of those who have arrived in Wales under the family scheme. However, this has not been forthcoming. The outgoing Prime Minister has made a commitment to enable switching between schemes, but the implementation of this seems a way off at present.

We have committed to providing “thank you” payments to secondary hosts for those people who are offering a new placement in the event that the initial placement made under the Ukraine Family Scheme ends. These secondary placements must be agreed by the relevant

local authority to enable funding to be provided. As with all other Ukrainian visa holders, the funding will be available for the first 12 months after visas are granted.

We have recently launched a new campaign to encourage more people and landlords to offer to host people from Ukraine. This will support move-on from welcome centres and help ensure we have a pool of potential hosts as we approach the six-month milestone since the start of the Homes for Ukraine scheme. I would appreciate it if committee members were able to support our efforts to promote this campaign in their constituencies. More information can be found at: <https://gov.wales/offerhome>

Ukrainian visa holders have the right to freedom of movement within the UK and many will want to move between the nations of the UK. There has never been a barrier to Ukrainians moving in this way. However, we need to work with the other UK nations to ensure that when such movement happens, the funding follows the person to enable 'thank you' payments and the tariff for public services to be provided. We can confirm that a process has been established to enable this to happen, but it requires the receiving local authority to have formally agreed to the re-match into their area.

We have provided guidance to Welsh local authorities to explain the related processes and we will be updating the Sanctuary website and our guidance for sponsors/hosts.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Hutt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke above the first letter "J".

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