



John Griffiths MS  
Chair, Local Government and Housing Committee  
Welsh Parliament  
Cardiff Bay  
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17 November 2023

Dear John,

Thank you for your letter of 20 October following my appearance at the Local Government and Housing Committee on 5 October, where the housing of people fleeing Ukraine was scrutinised. In your letter, you requested some additional information, which I am pleased to provide below.

Firstly, you asked for clarification of whether our new accommodation provider 'Calder World of Travel' has been used by the UK Government to provide refugee accommodation, as well as some additional information on the anticipated length and value of this contract. I understand that Calders World of Travel is used by the Home Office from time to time for various schemes including Afghan bridging accommodation. In terms of contract duration and value, the current initial accommodation contract booked through Calders World of Travel runs until April 2024. There is potential to extend the contract until September 2024 should this prove necessary. The value of the contract in the Crown Commercial Services contract is £15m - £18m over the life of the contract, but this may differ depending on demand, so these figures represent the estimated spend at award, based on the numbers/requirements known in summer 2023.

You also asked for an update on how many Ukrainian refugees are currently living in Wales and any further information relating to what measures are in place to collect this information, including whether the Welsh Government is recording numbers of those leaving Wales and their reasons for doing so. On that, we have a secure data sharing service in place between the Welsh Government, local authorities, health boards and the Contact Centre. It gives an up to date, single source of information for those who provide support to Ukrainian citizens coming into Wales. The service shows that as of 9/11/23 there were around 4,700 Ukrainians living in Wales. The service also provides information on numbers who have left and the location that they have moved to but does not collect reasons why those individuals have left.

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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.

Building on my written evidence on the budget, you requested a further breakdown of how the £40 million budget for 2023-24 has been administered. I hope the following table is helpful:

<b>Cost Heading</b>		<b>Budget Allocation</b>	<b>Revised Budget</b>
<b>Initial Accommodation</b>	Hotels		£8,985,000
	Holiday Parks		£6,100,000
	Welcome Centres		£5,050,000
	Wraparound costs		£3,700,000
	<b>Sub- Total</b>	<b>£27,827,300.00</b>	<b>£23,835,000</b>
	Welcome Phase Support	£150,000.00	£25,000
	10% Contingency	£2,782,700.00	£0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£30,760,000.00</b>	<b>£23,860,000</b>
Host 'Thank You' Top Up Payments		<b>£2,500,000.00</b>	<b>£1,300,000</b>
Contact Centre		<b>£1,748,000.00</b>	<b>£1,300,000</b>
Emergency Transport		<b>£50,000.00</b>	<b>£100,000</b>
Communications and Internal Administration inc. Legal Costs and Translation		<b>£285,000.00</b>	<b>£160,000</b>
Accommodation for Pets		<b>£210,000.00</b>	<b>£110,000</b>
Data Platform		<b>£496,000.00</b>	<b>£500,000</b>
Move-on Pan-Wales Task Force		<b>£0.00</b>	<b>£150,000</b>
<b>LA Funding - Homes for Ukraine</b>	Move-on Support	<b>£2,000,000.00</b>	£1,520,000
	Settle and Integrate Funding	<b>£1,951,000.00</b>	£1,950,000
	Further LA Funding (Homelessness UKG Consequential)		£4,750,000
	<b>Total</b>		<b>£8,220,000</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>£40,000,000.00</b>	<b>£35,700,000.00</b>

In terms of the reduction of £4.3 million to this budget, this decision followed months of intensive cross-government work. We as Welsh Government have developed a prudent plan to respond to the extraordinary financial pressures facing public services. As you will be aware, my colleague the Finance Minister, Rebecca Evans, [Speaking in the Senedd](#) on 17 October, set out that the priority for this government is to protect core services, jobs, and people hardest hit by the current cost of living crisis. She announced a package of changes to spending plans. Every ministerial portfolio was asked to make a contribution to meet the extraordinary financial pressures. We have re-prioritised spending and activities as much as possible, rather than cutting programmes as a whole.

This has included £4.3 million released from the Ukraine Humanitarian Response programme. This saving has been secured due to the highly successful delivery of our plan to move guests from initial accommodation into longer term, independent accommodation. This, coupled with the slowdown in arrivals from Ukraine, has led to efficiency savings.

In terms of your questions about Wales' £8.22 million share of the UK Government's £150 million Homelessness Prevention Fund, £2 million was originally set aside for move on support including £500k for national support, and £1.95 million in respect of a discretionary fund, with allocations being adjusted in year in line with the terms and conditions in the grant offer letter. An additional £4.75 million was subsequently allocated directly to local authorities as homelessness prevention funding.

During the Committee session, your members requested additional information on four additional areas. Taking each in turn:

- Feedback on progress in relation to converting appropriate placements into commercial lodging arrangements, should thank you payments not be available in year 3

We have established a small working group consisting of several local authorities and Housing Justice Cymru to explore the practicalities of, and appetite for, converting appropriate host placements into lodging arrangements where the lodger would make a rental contribution to their landlord. This is intended to provide an opportunity for existing host/guest living arrangements to continue if thank you payments come to an end, if that is what both the host and guest wish to do. This is also anticipated to have wider benefits for the host and guest in terms of having more formalised arrangements in place and the guest having the opportunity to begin living more independently in a supported environment, which may help them to eventually move onto private rental accommodation. We are working with a small number of local authorities who will pilot these arrangements in order to develop some case studies, which will be presented to other local authorities along with some light-touch guidance to enable a wider roll-out should the pilots be successful.

- More details on analysis undertaken by the Welsh Government on the reasons for refusal of accommodation

Feedback on the reasons why guests refuse offers of longer-term accommodation has been received anecdotally from local authority caseworkers and Housing Justice Cymru, who work directly with guests to support move on. There is a complex range of reasons why different households have refused longer term offers of accommodation. Reasons include guests' preferences for certain types of accommodation or a particular location, concerns around the affordability of housing and in some cases a reluctance to commit to longer-term arrangements as they have intentions to move back to Ukraine or outside of Wales. Local authorities and third sector partners continue to work with guests to manage their expectations about their housing options and highlight the benefits of living more independently within communities, where they can live more settled lives. The recent changes we have made to the Code of Conduct for guests residing in initial accommodation clearly sets out the requirement for guests to engage positively with local authorities to find longer-term housing. The revised Code came into effect on 27 October.

Supporting guests into longer-term accommodation continues to be a priority for the Welsh Government, and this is reflected in the funding we have made available to local authorities across Wales to support the move on of guests from initial accommodation.

- Details of the total costs paid to CTM, once all figures are reconciled

To date we have made payments of £24.2m to CTM since the start of the contract on 17 June 2022 and we're currently processing additional outstanding invoices, liaising closely with CTM as is our usual process to resolve any outstanding queries prior to payment.

- Details of the Welsh Government's ongoing work to analyse annual returns on the grant provided to local authorities and registered social landlords to provide homes (including modular accommodation) for those in housing need

The Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme (TACP) was established in year during the 2022-23 financial year to provide good quality, longer-term accommodation for everyone in housing, including those being resettled from Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine. In its first year, the Programme provided £76.4m to local authorities and Registered Social Landlords to bring forward 936 homes.

Following the 2022-23 financial year, officials asked TACP grant recipients to complete and return an annual return form. This return requested information such as the dates of completion and occupation of TACP-funded properties, where occupants have been rehoused from, and whether the property is being used on a transitional or longer-term basis. Not all annual returns have been received, but work is currently underway to secure outstanding returns and analyse data provided within them.

I hope this information will assist the Committee in your scrutiny.

Yours Sincerely

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

**Jane Hutt AS/MS**  
**Gweinidog Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol a'r Prif Chwip**  
**Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip**