



Open Report on behalf of Mark Baxter - Chief Fire Officer

Report to:	Public Protection and Community Scrutiny Committee
Date:	19 April 2022
Subject:	Lincolnshire's Ukraine Response

Summary:

This report provides assurance on the arrangements established by Lincolnshire County Council, Lincolnshire's District Councils, and multi-agency partners to deliver the government requirements in relation to the Ukraine humanitarian crisis.

Actions Required:

Public Protection and Community Scrutiny Committee is invited to review and comment on the contents of this report.

1. Background

In March 2022, in response to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, the government launched two visa schemes:

Ukraine Family Scheme: allowing family to join family members or extend their stay in the UK. The government has not given local authorities any specific duties towards this group. That said, a contact route has been set up through the Wellbeing Service to provide advice and to signpost to support.

Homes for Ukraine (HfU) Scheme; offering a route of entry to those who may not have family members in the UK but have someone here willing to provide them with a home (sponsors). Phase one requires a sponsor to be able to name their 'guests'. Organisations / community groups and individuals without an established link can register an interest but this will not be actioned until the government rolls out phase two in due course. The government requires local authorities to undertake a number of specific duties in relation to arrivals through this route.

The HfU national process is as follows:

1. Sponsor and guest find each other and agree to a match.
2. Either the sponsor or the guest fills out the single visa application form online using both parties' details.
3. After the application is submitted, security checks are done on both the sponsor, all other adults in the sponsor's household, and the guest. The application form will ask for details

on the location of the proposed accommodation for the guest so that details can be passed to local authorities. The data transfer steps are as follows:

- a. The sponsor and guest's data are submitted to the Home Office via the visa application process.
 - b. This data, including the address of the sponsor, is then passed to DLUHC and allocated to the relevant council. This is then visible to the council on a national database (Foundry).
 - c. The visa application will then be processed by the Home Office.
 4. Once both sponsor and guest have passed the national checks, the Home Office will issue the guest with a permit to travel. The guest can then travel to the UK and coordinate their arrival with the sponsor.
 5. The local authorities are required to:
 - a. Undertake a visit to the accommodation to check its suitability. In Lincolnshire this is being done by District Council Housing teams. Successful completion of this triggers the release of the £350 monthly 'thank you' payment to the host. These payments are made for a maximum of 12 months.
 - b. Carry out DBS / enhanced DBS checks on members of the sponsor household. Successful completion of these checks releases a payment of £10.5k per person to the County Council to provide support. This includes an immediate one-off payment of £200 per person to those arriving to meet their immediate needs during the time it takes for them to apply for Universal Credit. communities. The £10,500 for Ukrainian nationals is for the first year.
 - c. Provide access to school places. This is funded separately.
 - d. If sponsorship arrangements fail, District Council statutory homelessness duties are activated.

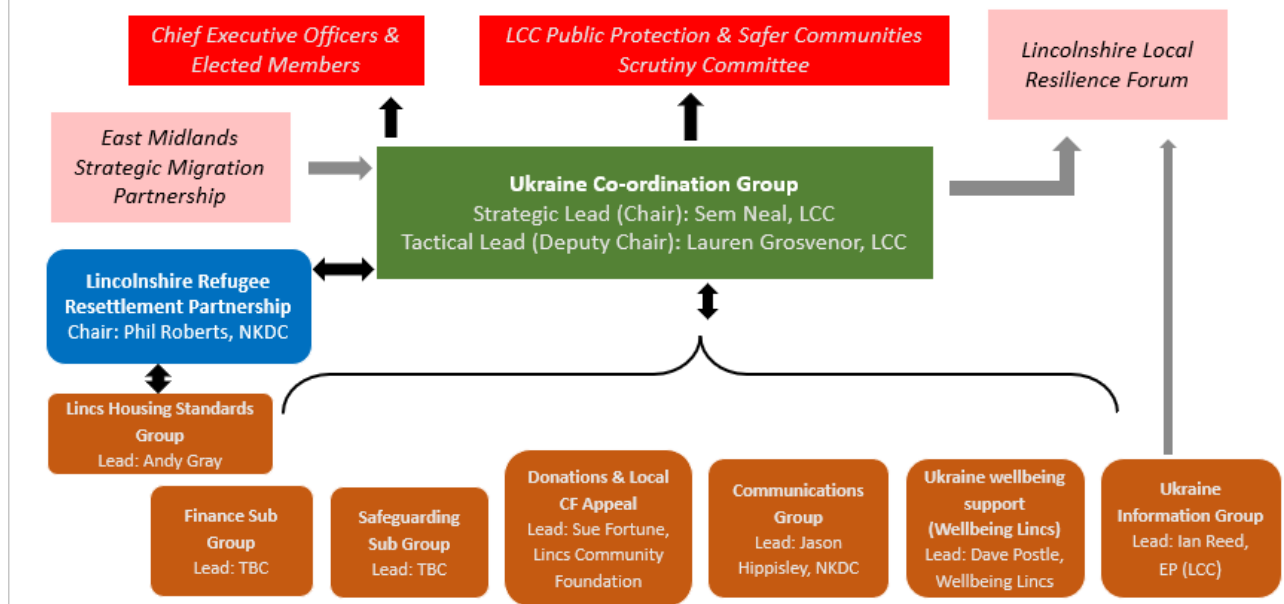
Lincolnshire County Council is co-ordinating activity as this is a humanitarian crisis rather than a civil contingencies emergency. That said, the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum (LRF) is providing appropriate support.

New guidance arrives almost daily. The Council is involved in weekly calls with the Strategic Migration Partnership hosted within East Midlands Councils and a range of other national webinars and briefings.

A local Co-Ordination Group has been established, and the governance and co-ordination arrangements are shown below.

Lincolnshire's existing Refugee Resettlement Partnership, convened by North Kesteven District Council, has responded to the arrival of Syrian families, Afghan evacuees in August 2021, and the set-up of asylum seeker accommodation throughout the autumn. Members include LCC, District Councils and NHS / Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG).

Ukraine refugee coordination structure



The following arrangements have been agreed and mobilised:

- Co-Ordination Group Terms of Reference
- Information Sharing Agreement between LCC & District Councils
- Data sharing, home visit, safeguarding and payments process
- Web page on LCC website with links to government guidance
- Letter to sponsors
- Welcome pack for guests
- Wellbeing Service support line for new arrivals (both schemes)
- Mechanism for making £200 payments to arrivals
- Mechanism for making £350 payments to hosts
- Financial claims process. LCC is the accountable body for the £10.5k and must dispense this to cover District Council and other support costs.
- Risk Register
- Welcome Appeal / Fund, launched through Lincolnshire Community Foundation

Colleagues are also:

- Developing a 'safe and well' visit by Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue
- Working with the voluntary sector to co-ordinate wrap around support
- Ensuring access to appropriate mental health support

2. Conclusion

This report provides an overview of arrangements at present, and assurance that the government requirements as they currently stand are fully met in Lincolnshire.

The government guidance continues to evolve, with more arriving daily / weekly, and more promised on almost every aspect of the scheme. The governance systems in place mean that changes can be identified and acted upon quickly.

The government is also working on a second phase to allow communities to host multiple families, as well as matching hosts to arrivals where they have no existing connection. There is no information on this yet, and what the requirements on local authorities may be.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

A full risk register is being maintained by the Ukraine Refugee Coordination Group.

4. Background Papers

The following background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report.

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Guidance - Apply for a visa under the Ukraine Family Scheme	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-ukraine-family-scheme-visa
Guidance - Apply for a visa under the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme (Homes for Ukraine)	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-visa-under-the-ukraine-sponsorship-scheme
Homes for Ukraine - Guidance for councils	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-guidance-for-councils

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