

News Release

Communications and Media Team



Tel: 01803 861368 / 01822 813648

Email: communications@swdevon.gov.uk

Councils 'measured' welcome to Home Office Homes for Ukraine announcement

DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL PRESS RELEASE - Sent out on behalf of Team Devon

Devon councils have given a measured welcome to a Home Office announcement, that will see additional payments made to host households participating in the Homes to Ukraine programme.

Under the new terms, the hosts of Ukrainian guests who have been in the UK for over 12 months will be eligible for the increased national 'Thank You' payment of £500. The current national amount is £350 per host. This increased national amount is available until month 24 of the guests stay in the UK.

But councils will see Government funding reduce from £10,500 to £5,900 per guest to provide wraparound support for new arrivals from 1 January 2023.

They will however have access to additional funding to help mitigate homelessness, and to help councils with housing responsibilities acquire housing for people fleeing conflict from Ukraine and Afghanistan.

In Devon, more than 1,000 people have put themselves forward to be sponsors with over 500 more confirming their interest in becoming a future host. This has meant that over 1,600 citizens from Ukraine have arrived since Russia first invaded the country in February 2022.

District, County and Parish Councils have worked closely with voluntary and local community organisations to support both hosts and their guests.

Councillor Roger Croad, Devon County Council's Cabinet Member with responsibility for communities, said:

"I'm pleased that the Government is extending their support to host households for an additional 12 months, and that additional funding will be available to help councils respond to the Home for Ukraine programme.

"However, we are yet to see the detail of this announcement or understand the impact that the reduced funding per guest will have in real terms on wraparound support for new arrivals."

Exeter City Council Leader Phil Bialyk, Chair of the Devon District's Forum, said:

"It is good news that the Government is extending its support to host households as part of the very important Homes for Ukraine programme.

"Many Ukrainians have been warmly welcomed in Exeter and across Devon through this programme, and it great that hosts will be offered enhanced support to extend those stays.

"But if the Government reduces the funding Council's receive for support services that is a concern, particularly given the growing pressures that all local authority budgets are under at the present time."

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