

# News Release

Communications and Media Team



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## Ongoing Support for Refugees from Ukraine

**06/09/2022**

South Hams is now home to 155 Ukrainians who are fleeing the war in Ukraine, from 66 family groups, and in West Devon 139 Ukrainians from 51 family groups.

Working with the voluntary sector and Devon County Council, both South Hams District and West Devon Borough Councils continue to play an important role in delivering the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme and helping Ukrainians beyond their initial six-month sponsorship.

Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the Government launched the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme. At the time both Councils were called upon to provide a range of services to facilitate the scheme. This included carrying out property checks before Ukrainians arrive, conducting welcome visits once they have settled and ensuring support to meet their immediate needs

Together South Hams and West Devon have created a shared project team to ensure that both Councils are as effective as possible in meeting the needs of the guests and their hosts.

Support has also been commissioned from both the Citizens Advice (CA) and the Council for Voluntary Sector (CVS).

Citizens Advice are providing support to individuals who require help with claiming benefits, jobs, childcare, and immigration enquiries and the CVS have supported with arranging community events and supporting volunteers and support groups.

**Cllr Judy Pearce Leader of South Hams District Council, said:** “This has been a huge collaborative effort, between ourselves as South Hams District Council, our neighbours in West Devon Borough Council, our local communities and the voluntary sector.

“Well done to everyone for stepping up and supporting the families in their time of need, in particular those people who have been generous enough to open their homes. It has not been easy to turn around the complex support that these families require in such a short amount of time, but both Cllr Jory and I are proud of the collective support that has come together.”

“Sadly this support effort is still required as the war in Ukraine continues. Cllr Jory and I are writing to Government, urgently seeking clarity on the future of the Homes for Ukraine scheme and a more permanent solution for the Ukrainian families.

Both Councils are concerned that as we reach the initial six-month sponsorship period; many of the placements will end.

The Councils think that as the ‘Homes for Ukraine Scheme’ was only meant to be temporary, there is now a risk that some of the families might find themselves homeless. With significant pressure already on temporary accommodation in the area, both leaders are now calling on the Government for ongoing plans for the future of the scheme.

**Cllr Neil Jory, Leader of West Devon Borough Council, said:** “Opening your home to a family in need is a huge act of kindness. Many of our hosts have gone above and beyond what is expected of them to ensure that the Ukrainian families are supported to settle in and access services. We cannot thank them enough for their generosity.

"However, the host placements are not sustainable long term with some placements only being available for a few more months due to other commitments. It is important that we continue to pull together as a community to support these families to access alternate host placements and, where possible, long term independent accommodation options."

Anyone who wishes to offer self-contained rental accommodation to a Ukrainian household is encouraged to contact SeaMoor Lettings on [Seamoor.lettings@swdevon.gov.uk](mailto:Seamoor.lettings@swdevon.gov.uk).

For further information on becoming a host please visit;

The link to obtain information on hosting is: [www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-sponsor-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-sponsor-guidance)

The link to register as a host is: [www.gov.uk/register-interest-homes-ukraine](http://www.gov.uk/register-interest-homes-ukraine)

Both Councils are taking a report to the next meeting of their Executive and Hub in September, explaining how the scheme has worked, what they councils have done to facilitate the scheme and their concerns for the coming months.

Reports can be found here:

- West Devon Borough Council's Hub Committee
- South Hams District council's Executive

Or you can tune in live to each meeting on You Tube:

**South Hams:** [www.youtube.com/user/southhamsCouncil](http://www.youtube.com/user/southhamsCouncil)


**West Devon:** [www.youtube.com/channel/UCDZEXV47SxBpXUDR6qbhtIA](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDZEXV47SxBpXUDR6qbhtIA)

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