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The Rt Hon Grant Shapps
Secretary of State for the Home Department
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20 October 2022

For the urgent attention of: The Right Honourable Grant Shapps MP, Secretary of State for the Home Department

Dear Sir,

HOMES FOR UKRAINE: Urgent action needed to prevent homelessness

As the Homes for Ukraine scheme comes to an end for many, we are writing urgently regarding the critical need for Government action to help Ukrainian guests facing homelessness.

Gaps created by the piecemeal nature of your measures to support arrivals from Ukraine has forced local authorities, charities and members of the public to shoulder responsibility, with little to no meaningful leadership from central Government.

The situation in the Royal Borough of Greenwich

Last month, 12 September 2022, the Homes for Ukraine scheme reached the six-month mark. Since the beginning of the scheme, we have welcomed 514 people from Ukraine to our borough, with nearly 1,000 people in total expected.

So far, 25 individuals and 38 families have approached the Council on the brink of homelessness – approximately one in five of those who have arrived since March.

Initially, approaches received were predominantly from households arriving under the Ukraine Family Scheme. We are now seeing a worrying increase in approaches from breakdowns with sponsors. This is likely to increase significantly once six-month placements come to an end.

We have been carrying out phone surveys with guests and sponsors to understand their intentions. From the initial 62 sponsors surveyed, we have received 43 responses. Twenty-nine have confirmed extending placement beyond six months, while 14 have confirmed they will not.

What we are doing to support families

For each person who makes a homelessness approach to the Council, we complete a holistic assessment that focuses on their needs and how we can best support them. This covers everything from housing and employment to finance and education.

We have provided temporary accommodation to twenty-one households who have nowhere else to go, referring people through to our Universal Credit Support Team if they require financial support. This comes on top of the 1,700 households already in temporary accommodation from Royal Greenwich. We no longer have TA stock left within our borough.

We have completed applications for one-off cash payments from our Emergency Support Scheme, referred to our partners Beam for support with employment, and are in discussions with key housing providers to talk about corporate sponsorship. Locally, we are also resorting to recruiting more residents as sponsors. But we remain extremely concerned about the potential shortfall and the resultant housing crisis. We are expecting many more families to present as homeless in the coming months.

Our asks & concerns

We wrote to your predecessor on 28 July 2022 to warn that Royal Greenwich, like many other local authorities across the UK, could be facing an unprecedented and wholly unmanageable housing crisis. We received no reply.

We need you to take urgent steps to avoid this happening:

1. The UK Government must introduce a long-term housing plan for Ukrainian guests on three-year visas

The issue of accommodation is critical. The prospect of further exacerbating an already unprecedented housing crisis of this magnitude will have far-reaching effects on statutory and non-statutory services across the borough. We need the Government to address the crisis and provide a real, long-term housing plan for Ukrainian guests on three-year visas.

2. Support for local authorities

We continue to ask for urgent advice and guidance to be given to all local authorities to support planning and risk management, which has not yet been provided, despite repeated calls. Publicly, the Government has promised councils £10,500 per person to cover costs in case of a homelessness referral. We have yet to see a penny.

3. An uplift of the financial support for families to help during the cost of living crisis

With inflation hitting a new high of 10.1%, surpassing city economist predictions, we are even more concerned about how this will affect Ukrainian guests and their hosts, some of whom are now feeling the squeeze from the cost of living crisis. Further financial support should be given to Ukrainian guests, and hosts who extend placements.

We are facing multiple crises at once: rising costs of living including basics like food and fuel, inflation, climate emergency, major supply-chain disruption, and sky high rents and mortgage rates, with the most vulnerable hit hardest. We remain deeply concerned about the fate of those from Ukraine after the Homes for Ukraine scheme comes to an end. The Government must take urgent action now.

We look forward to receiving a reply to this pressing matter.

Yours Sincerely,



Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald
Cabinet Member for Health and
Adult's Social Care



Councillor Pat Slattery
Cabinet Member for Housing,
Neighbourhoods, and Homelessness