

REFLECTIONS ON THE UKRAINE SCHEME IN SCOTLAND:



Feedback from clients of Ukraine Advice Scotland

September 2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ukraine Advice Scotland service is run by the independent charity JustRight Scotland and is funded by the Scottish Government. During August 2022 a feedback survey of 9 questions was sent to clients and 143 survey responses were received. The data was analysed using a thematic coding process undertaken by two authors.

It was clear from many responses that people have relocated to the UK with the hope of a long-term move. At the moment Ukraine Scheme visas are fixed-term to last for three years. With respondents finding long-term accommodation and moving the centre of their lives to Scottish communities, it is important that there is a clear visa strategy in place as early as possible so that Ukrainians and their families can plan ahead.

Positive survey responses

"I would like to thank all people who are doing tremendous work with all this resettlement."

The most noticeable feature of the feedback was how positive many responses were. In general respondents found the visa process sufficiently easy to use and the

welcome to Scotland to be effective and warm. Respondents noted as a positive feature of the Homes for Ukraine Visa the option of applying directly from Ukraine.

Choosing Scotland

While travelling to an English-speaking country was seen as key to greater financial independence for many respondents, it was also clear that Scotland was perceived as having a particular cultural and political identity, reputation for friendliness and aligned cultural values, including a history of fighting for independence. For those respondents who had used the Super Sponsor Scheme, access to a government-backed scheme was important for stability.

Areas where improvement is needed

Communication pre-arrival

There was frustration reported at poor communication and no proper Home Office trouble-shooting mechanism to deal with problems in individual cases. The Scottish Super Sponsor Scheme process was not well integrated with the visa process (for example requiring an address for Biometric Residence Card collection on the visa application when Super Sponsor arrivals could be accommodated anywhere in Scotland).

Arrivals process for people who need housing and financial assistance

Arrivals under the Super Sponsor Scheme found the process unpredictable and at times difficult to navigate with no reliable information about who to contact to make a travel plan. Respondents expressed a desire for a consistent arrivals process relying on paid staff with access to interpreters. Some respondents had unmet needs due to immediate destitution, such as insufficient clothing. Some respondents under the Super Sponsor Scheme wanted to be placed directly with a host, but instead were left waiting in hotels.

Accommodation uncertainty and risk of homelessness

A significant theme in responses was uncertainty around move-on planning for accommodation. This was emphatically raised about hosting placements, where people faced a 'cliff-edge' of homelessness once the hosting finished.

This was also raised about Scottish Super Sponsor Scheme cases in hotels, where housing move-on processes were unclear, did not consistently take into account

individual wishes and could feel arbitrary and so unfair. People wanted more help finding private accommodation, including through help paying rent deposits.

Meeting additional needs and reasonable adjustments

The Scottish Super Sponsor Scheme provided an important life-line for people with additional needs who would find it difficult to find an individual sponsor and its closure has created problems for some families, including family separation.

The facilities in hotels were described as unsuitable by some respondents with a disabled family member or who had additional needs. There was some evidence of over-crowding. It was unclear what quality control, feedback processes and inspection processes were in place for hotel and cruise ship accommodation.

Other integration needs and problems with accessing services

Respondents reported problems with finding out which services they needed to register with locally, particularly with understanding and accessing healthcare. Respondents had also reported problems with social welfare benefits, education and sufficiently intensive support to access employment. Respondents reported issues with transport due to financial barriers, leaving people having to walk long distances and limiting integration options in rural areas.

What else did we learn? Read the full report here:

<https://bit.ly/UASReportSurvey2022>



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