



**Steve Bowles**

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To Town and Parish Councils

15

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Dear Colleagues,

I wanted to write to you to bring you up to date on the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme announced by the Government yesterday. I'm sure that within your communities, there are people who've asked about this and who may have expressed a desire to help and to take part. This is the scheme being launched by the Government to allow Ukrainians with no family ties to the UK to be sponsored by individuals or organisations who can offer them a home such as a spare room or unoccupied residential self-contained unit.

Yesterday the website was launched by the Government which accepts expressions of interest from those who may be in a position to offer accommodation to people from Ukraine fleeing the conflict. The Council also received a letter from Michael Gove last night confirming the scheme and providing some more details.

These are as follows:

- Those who are interested in offering accommodation can register on the 'Homes for Ukraine' website – [www.gov.uk/homes-for-ukraine](http://www.gov.uk/homes-for-ukraine)
- The letter confirms that there will be a payment of £350 per month to householders taking in refugees.

- In addition, there will be a payment to councils of £10,500 per person in order to support the extra range and volume of services that will be required. This will include vetting of applicants to house refugees, education and social care for both the elderly and young. We are urgently seeking clarification about this funding – for example it is not clear whether it also needs to fund NHS services, what period the funding is intended to cover, how to access it etc.
- The letter also confirms that the £350 payment will be tax free and not affect eligibility for benefits. We are confirming that this includes issues such as the single occupancy discount for Council Tax.

In addition to this scheme, the Council has also formed a local strategic partnership so we can be in the best possible position across the whole of Buckinghamshire to co-ordinate a strong response to whatever scenario presents. It means we have representatives from accommodation, education, health, safeguarding and other services all aligned to prepare for and support any arrivals as best we can.

I wanted to provide you with as much detail as we have at this point in time, and more communication will follow. For now, it's about channelling local and individual offers to the government website and making sure you all have the information you need such as the payment schemes, if you are asked more about this locally.

I hope this is a useful update and I will write again as these plans unfold. Thank you for your ongoing support and the important part you and your local communities play in responding to such crises.

Yours,

**Steve Bowles**

Buckinghamshire Council Cabinet Member for Communities