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Cross-party MPs urge UK Government to act as homelessness amongst Ukrainian refugees increases sixfold in a year

- **Recent data reveals that over 4,000 Ukrainian households have received homelessness support from their local authority last year since arriving in the UK.**
- **Since June 2022, the number of Ukrainian households receiving homelessness assistance from their local authority has increased more than six times as the cost-of-living crisis continues across the country.**

A cross-party coalition of over 70 MPs, including the former Home Secretary Priti Patel, and Peers have signed an open letter urging the UK Government to act immediately to support Ukrainian refugees in Britain as new Government data shows **over 4,000 Ukrainian households have received homelessness support from their local authority in the last year.**¹

In a letter to the Minister for Housing and Homelessness Felicity Buchan MP, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Ending Homelessness is calling on the Government to improve funding available to hosts and sponsors to ensure that no Ukrainian seeking refuge in the UK is left facing homelessness. Their call comes as concerns rise that, a year on from the Russian invasion of Ukraine, a growing number of Ukrainian refugees in the UK are at risk of homelessness due to gaps in support and funding as the cost-of-living crisis continues.

Although the Government's response to the conflict in Ukraine through the introduction of three new visa-based schemes to support those seeking safety in the UK has been commended, the design and implementation of funding available has left some refugees outside of the scope of support – putting living arrangements in jeopardy and leaving them at risk of homelessness.

Currently, Ukrainians under the Family Scheme receive no financial support from the UK Government, forcing them and their family members to rely on their own resources instead to get by. The funding available for hosts under the Homes for Ukraine scheme also lacks flexibility, with lodging arrangements excluded from the scheme, and payments fixed regardless of the size of the family sponsored. Without changes to the support offered and consistency between visa schemes, more refugees could end up facing homelessness this year as living arrangements break down - undermining the Government's commitment to supporting those seeking sanctuary in the UK from the conflict.

In addition, the cost-of-living crisis and the lack of affordable housing has severely restricted people's ability to move on from sponsorship and into their own homes, **with recent research finding that one in ten Ukrainian refugees have been threatened with eviction since arriving in the UK.**² With record-high rents and the need for deposits and guarantors, people are struggling to access privately rented accommodation if their sponsorship or living arrangements have broken

down. This reflects the wider pressures of the housing crisis across the country, with many struggling to make ends meet as prices and living costs continue to rise.

The cross-party group is deeply concerned that Ukrainians who came to the UK to escape conflict will be forced into homelessness unless changes to the existing schemes are implemented. **Since June 2022, there has been more than a sixfold increase in the number of Ukrainian households receiving homelessness assistance from their local authority, with a 44% increase in the number of homeless Ukrainian households between November and January alone.**¹

The APPG for Ending Homelessness is appealing to the UK Government to consider their recommendations to harmonise funding across visa schemes in order to protect and support Ukrainians seeking refuge in the UK, as well as build upon the proud history of the UK in providing a safe home to those escaping conflict by appointing a successor to Lord Harrington as Minister of State for Refugees. Without imminent action and support, more refugees could be forced into homelessness this year.

Bob Blackman MP and Florence Eshalomi MP, said "As we approach a year since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, it is unacceptable that thousands of people who arrived in the UK to escape the conflict are now facing homelessness. While the announcement of continued funding under the existing schemes for both sponsors and refugees is welcome, more must be done to prevent increasing numbers of Ukrainian refugees from being forced into homelessness.

"Unfortunately, many of the challenges facing refugees in securing safe housing are not unique to this community but rather indicative of the wider crisis across the country, as more and more people are forced into unstable living situations due to rising costs.

"We are calling upon the UK Government to continue supporting Ukrainian refugees in the UK through the introduction of extended and harmonised financial support, as well as the appointment of a new Minister of State for Refugees, to ensure no one fleeing the war in Ukraine and seeking sanctuary in the UK is left facing homelessness."

Matt Downie, Chief Executive at Crisis who provides the Secretariat for the APPGEH, said "No Ukrainian who has found refuge in the UK after fleeing the devastating conflict at home should be left without a safe place to live. Although the visa schemes introduced by the Government have provided a lifeline for many refugees, it is incredibly concerning to hear that over 4,000 are now at risk of homelessness due to issues surrounding funding and financial support. What's more, the severe shortage of affordable housing across the country has restricted their ability to move on into settled housing and rebuild their lives – an issue which is affecting far too many people in the UK as living costs continue to rise.

"We urge the Government to consider implementing changes to the existing schemes, as well as the introduction of a dedicated refugee resettlement strategy, to ensure no one who has sought safety in the UK is left without a home and facing homelessness."

-Ends-

Notes to Editor

1. Based on data from 72% of English lower-tier local authorities from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homelessness-management-information-ukrainian-nationals-england>

2. Work Rights Centre, 'UK's Ukrainian refugee population at risk of homelessness', 27 September 2022: [UK's Ukrainian refugee population at risk of homelessness | Work Rights Centre](#)

About Crisis

Crisis is the national charity for people facing homelessness across Wales, Scotland and England. We know that homelessness is not inevitable, and we know that together, we can end it.

We provide services directly to people experiencing homelessness, carry out research into the causes and consequences of homelessness, and campaign for the changes needed to end it.

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