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██████████
Settled Charity

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Dear ██████████

Thank you for your letter dated 4 August 2023 raising your concerns about issues facing Ukrainian's seeking to come to the UK along with recommendations your charity, Settled, would like us to consider. I am replying as a Senior Policy Manager of the Home Office's Ukraine Response Strategic Policy Team. I will attempt to answer some of the points you raised in your letter, although the Home Office cannot provide immigration advice to specific cases.

Firstly, thank you for sharing your concerns and suggestions, I apologise for the delay in responding to your letter. They are very welcome and we will take them into account as part of our ongoing work in continuously reviewing the schemes to ensure their sustainability and tackle misuse or exploitation.

As you are aware, following the invasion of Ukraine we quickly established three bespoke schemes for Ukrainians who needed sanctuary. Through these schemes, the UK has welcomed, or extended permission to, over 215,000 Ukrainians fleeing Putin's brutal war. All those who are granted permission to remain in the UK under our Ukraine schemes are provided 36 months permission, given access to benefits and services, such as healthcare, and have the right to work.

I have noted your concerns relating to the risk of possible nuclear power plant incidents, for example in Zaporizhzhia, and I want to reassure you that the UK Government monitors these types of risks across the region. We are confident that Ukraine will be successful in this war and that the country of Ukraine will be safe again for those to whom we are providing temporary sanctuary.

On the issue of Ukrainians who may be exploited by criminal actors, we are aware of incidences where some Ukrainians seeking sanctuary under our schemes have been exploited by organised crime networks. Abuse of the schemes is not widespread, and we remain proud of having issued 240,000 visas under Homes for Ukraine and the Ukraine Family Scheme, with over 187,000 having arrived in the UK so far and a further 28,400 granted in-country extensions. However, any abuse of the schemes or exploitation of Ukrainian themselves is unacceptable and I'd like to reassure you that officials across the Home Office, including Border Force, are working continuously to identify and prevent instances such as these. Upon arrival, where Border Force identify that a Ukrainian has been the victim of exploitation, they are able to issue leave outside the rules which allows

them to apply for the Ukraine Extension Scheme, which provides them with the same visa entitlements as those on the Homes For Ukraine Scheme and Ukraine Family Scheme.

On encouraging more sponsors to come forward, we work closely with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Community (DLUHC) who I know are working to build the number of new sponsors available, for example they have contacted all potential sponsors who have expressed an interest to see if they are still willing and able to sponsor.

DLUHC have undertaken a programme of regular promotion of the Homes for Ukraine scheme across the year, throughout the UK, and will continue to do so. This has consisted of Public Relations activity around key Ukrainian dates such as Ukraine Independence Day; placing social media content on our own channels; working with Devolved Administrations, councils, and partners to share content; and arranging Ministerial visits that highlight the scheme and the need to support Ukrainians.

We recognise that many Ukrainians use social media to meet new people and that many successful matches have been made through social media. It has provided a fast and effective way for prospective guests to find a suitable sponsor under Homes for Ukraine. However, we do recommend that all applicants take precautions when matching online and these are published on our GOV.UK webpages ([Homes for Ukraine: guidance for organisations making matches - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)). These resources for both adults and children are helpful: Children and young people - UK Safer Internet Centre ([Children and young people - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)) and Parents and Carers - UK Safer Internet Centre ([Parents and Carers - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)).

Social media can also be made safer by turning on strong privacy settings. Women's Aid and Facebook have teamed up to produce a guide to staying safe online which can be found at: [Womens-Aid-Facebook-Safety-Guide-2017.pdf \(womensaid.org.uk\)](#)

On detaching sponsorship from the Ukraine visas, Home Office and DLUHC work closely with our partners across Local Government to deliver the UK Government's priority to continue to provide safe and secure haven for those fleeing the ongoing conflict, a cornerstone of which is a sponsor's commitment to accommodate their guests for at least 6 months as they integrate into the UK and become able to live independently while here.

In the minority of cases where sponsor relationships break down, statutory duties of local authorities relating to homelessness apply. The Government is providing £150 million additional funding in 2023/24 for Local Authorities and Devolved Administrations in recognition of their ongoing efforts to support Ukrainians, who cannot live with a sponsor or live independently, into sustainable accommodation.

Again, I would like to thank you for taking the time to write about these important issues. I trust that this response is helpful.

Yours sincerely,



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