

## EDUCATION SUPPORT FOR REFUGEES (UKRAINE)

<b>Committee name</b>	Children, Families and Education Select Committee
<b>Officer reporting</b>	Daniel Kennedy – Central Services Directorate Tracie Bushell – Central Services Directorate
<b>Papers with report</b>	None
<b>Ward</b>	All

### HEADLINES

This paper provides the Committee with an update on the support being provided to households who are living in Hillingdon who have been displaced by the conflict in Ukraine. Specifically, the paper provides the Committee with an update on the education support for children and how grant funding is being used to assist children settle and integrate into schools and their communities, and to improve their learning outcomes.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

**That the Committee notes the information presented within the report and asks questions about the support being provided to children.**

### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Working with a range of public and voluntary sector partners, Hillingdon Council has and continues to provide leadership to co-ordinate arrangements with hosts and a range of support services to assist those displaced by the conflict in Ukraine. Partnership working with the voluntary sector is providing direct support to households who need it for a range of services. This includes applying for a school place for their child(ren), registering with a GP, information about accessing health care services, access to financial assistance where this is required, access to adult learning and employment, options for re-housing as well as assistance to connect with support networks.

Since the launch of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme in March 2022, Hillingdon has received 368 guests, of which 118 are children under the age of 18 years old. As at the end of November 2023 there is now a total of 64 children living in Hillingdon under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme following some children and their families moving onto other accommodation and resettlement arrangements out of Hillingdon.

Hillingdon Council and voluntary sector partners maintain regular contact with those who have settled in Hillingdon.

In addition to the initial support to families upon arrival and subsequent support to settle into Hillingdon's communities, the government has provided local areas with funding for the financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24. The funding has enabled us to provide a wide range of support.

## **Current Support**

The current support offer is a broad package of support intended to support as many schools and families as possible. Schools were asked about their support needs 11 months ago and this led to some of the support outlined below. Other aspects of support, e.g., St Mary's Ukrainian school, have come from the feedback and experience of Ukrainian refugee groups, which schools in Hillingdon have not really been aware of. One reason for this is Ukrainian families have not flagged many concerns at school in terms of behaviour, requests for counselling and support. The arrival of our own Ukrainian support team is allowing families to communicate their needs, which they have not necessarily shared with their schools.

## **St Mary's Provision**

St Mary's Ukrainian school have opened a supplementary school based at Oak Wood School with our support. They provide a range of support services for children and families, including ESOL, trauma and counselling support and a traditional supplementary school offer.

This also provides a focal point for the community to support any Ukrainian family. There are many more than the Ukrainian families supported under the Homes for Ukraine (HFU) scheme. The St Mary's team are working closely with Hillingdon Education, North West London Health Trust to ensure there are mental health, trauma and support pathways available.

The school was launched in September 2023. They currently have 38 Hillingdon young people. There is an expectation that more will join as word gets out from our Ukrainian education team and their marketing in Ukraine and English.

St Mary's are providing Hillingdon with 4 education support workers and a team lead. This team follow a model already rolled out in a few other London boroughs and they are all trained in a range of important skills, such as early trauma identification and support on school site. Hillingdon's own Ukraine Education Team and other front-line officers are being trained in their successful programme, so there is consistency of approach.

## **Ukraine Education Team (ESWs)**

Hillingdon recruited 3 education support workers (including the programme manager) to support our schools and families. They are all refugees from the conflict and highly qualified professionals from Ukraine. They work closely with Hillingdon HFU Team and with St Mary's. The Programme Manager co-ordinates the work across both education teams and all schools have been contacted and ESWs have been meeting school leads, children, and families. The manager also co-ordinates the work with other Council and Health services.

The team all joined Hillingdon in October and have already had a big impact. Their successes so far:

- Helped to place children and young people in schools and college.
- Heard, assured, and recorded the stories of the trauma children, young people are living with and that their schools are unaware of.
- Supported family requests for children and young people to take up music again, to join after school clubs, to receive careers advice and guidance (post-16).
- Identified 148 children and young people in our schools, including the 64 children from HFU scheme. This number will grow as they get to every school.

- Liaising with organisations that support Afghan families, as some of our HFU families were originally refugees from Afghanistan. They are also supporting those who speak Ukrainian.

### **Educational Psychology offer**

We have commissioned 32 days of Educational Psychology time to support the work with our Ukrainian children. This support includes:

- Support for health pathways for those identified with trauma.
- Support for schools with individual concerns.
- Assessing children with suspected undiagnosed special educational needs at different ages.

### **School Support Offer**

The Education Improvement Team have been working with schools to support them with advice, guidance, and training. This has involved:

- Providing support resources and signposting who to contact for a range of issues on the Education LEAP pages.
- Direct support from the Ukraine Education Team
- Training advice and guidance from Education Improvement Advisors
- An Initial meeting for schools when the support was set out (January 2023) 7 schools attended.
- Regular updates through the weekly education bulletin and Headteacher termly events.
- Providing advice on how schools can get funding to support Ukrainian children directly from the HFU service. No school has undertaken this yet. We are repurposing the money to ensure schools get other type of support.
- Additional Education Psychology time as set out above.
- Training on EAL if requested.

### **Post 16 support**

Funding has been set aside to support Ukrainian young people 16-19.

The Post-16 partnership co-ordinator has set up an additional careers information and advice scheme which will track and support young people when we find out they are not engaged in education, employment, or training.

The post-16 brochure is being translated into Ukrainian by our education team, so that all families know what is available at post-16.

We are working closely with 3 colleges, Uxbridge, West Thames, and Burleigh colleges, to place and find courses for all Ukrainians.

### **Hub school**

To provide support around English as an additional language, we have identified 2 hub schools with strong EAL practice. We are reaching out to Minet Juniors and Harlington School to offer hub sessions for schools on teaching, learning, induction. This is currently in process.

## Language Link Offer to Schools

Language Link is Speech, Language, Communication software. It is considered one of the foremost Speech and Language support tools nationally.

Schools can use it to assess large groups of pupils in Infant, Junior and Secondary stages. It provides a large toolkit and bespoke plans for children to ensure they improve the areas they are weak at. It also trains schools in how to address those needs. It has been used by many primary schools and is now being used by secondaries.

Language Link also has an EAL strand that does the same thing for EAL learners. The aim is to offer a Hillingdon wide licence for every school for 2 or 3 years. This is one of the ways to help extend the impact of the funding by offering something practical and useful for every school.

The Council, schools and voluntary sector partners are providing a range of support services to children who have been displaced by the conflict in Ukraine to resettle and integrate into Hillingdon's communities; to help them feel safe, welcomed and to achieve the best outcomes. In terms of support to children and young people this includes the following, which at school level is being progressed through close working with schools across the Borough.

Additional support has been provided to children under the age of 5 at Children Centres across Hillingdon. Families have attended 'Stay and Play', Musical Babies, Toddler Time, Let's Get Active and Small Talk sessions.

To complement the education support for children and young people, support is also being provided to families by commissioned voluntary sector services. This includes providing bespoke support to Ukrainian guests referred to the service living in Hillingdon. Working closely with the Council, the voluntary sector is assisting hosts and guests, and supporting guests and their families with their integration and adaptation to life in the UK and delivering ongoing support services where necessary. This includes, but not limited to, school admissions, accessing ESOL, welfare benefit applications and assistance with accessing Job Centre Plus.

Families are also able to access assistance from the Stronger Families team who ensure that children, young people, and their families receive tailored support at the earliest point, from the most appropriate service(s), to enable children and young people to achieve their full potential. The Stronger Families service works together with families to prevent difficulties from escalating and becoming more complex. It is consent based and time limited. Families have the option to self-refer and access the service without any restrictions.

Families are supported with complex and multiple difficulties which are preventing parents from adequately caring for their children e.g., lack of knowledge of positive behaviour management, routines and boundaries, mental health, substance misuse, disengagement with education and risk of homelessness.

Families requiring support with moving from hosts accommodation into private sector renting are being supported by a dedicated Housing Officer. The 'Move-On Plan' has successfully assisted 13 families into private sector housing, and we are working with a further 16. Over the coming year we anticipate approximately 50 more Ukrainian families will require support to find private sector housing accommodation.

## **PERFORMANCE DATA**

There are currently 39 Ukrainian children attending Hillingdon Schools. A further 12 children are attending out of borough schools, 2 attending online Ukrainian studies, 7 attending College or University and 4 recently arrived children/ young people who are being supported by the relevant teams to find education placements within the London Borough of Hillingdon.

## **RESIDENT BENEFIT**

The offer of a tailored holistic model is enabling Ukrainian children and families to make the transition into education within Hillingdon. This is being achieved by addressing the need to support children and families on an individual basis through a dedicated team of professionals along with targeted support for schools.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications from this report. This report is for information only.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct legal implications from this report. This report is for information only.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.