

A Warm Scots Future

Fairer Scotland Duty Summary

May 2024

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Title of Policy, Strategy, Programme etc: A Warm Scots Future – Strategic Policy Position Paper

Summary of aims and expected outcomes of strategy, proposal, programme or policy:

Upon Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, the Scottish Government stood in solidarity with Ukraine and committed to supporting those seeking sanctuary. While our Warm Scots Welcome programme focused on the welcome accommodation and the immediate needs of displaced people from Ukraine, it is clear that a move towards a longer-term and more sustainable response is required.

This paper sets out the policy direction for the next phase of Scotland's response to the humanitarian crisis created by Russia's illegal war against Ukraine. This will help the Scottish Government and our partners transition from an emergency response to a long term and holistic approach that supports the integration of displaced people from Ukraine, in alignment with the New Scots refugee integration strategy.

Five overarching strategic priorities have been identified to guide this next phase of Scotland's Ukraine response:

1. A trauma informed, holistic and rights-based approach to long-term integration, in line with the New Scots refugee integration strategy
2. Reduce reliance on welcome accommodation
3. Boost long-term settled housing that leaves a legacy for Scotland
4. Pursue clarity on routes to settlement, family reunification and repatriation
5. Continued partnership and collaboration, ensuring good governance and recognising the lived experience of displaced people from Ukraine

By shifting focus to these priorities, we will be able to support the wider integration of displaced people from Ukraine in line with the New Scots approach to integration to help ensure that displaced people from Ukraine who have come to Scotland have the opportunity to build and live full and independent lives here.

Summary of evidence:

The findings reported in the ONS UK Humanitarian outcomes survey (February – March 2023) show that:

- 45% of visa holders entering the UK under Ukraine Humanitarian Schemes live with dependent children. Of those living with dependent children, 49% reported that their current childcare responsibilities limit their ability to take up work in the UK. Of those whose childcare responsibilities limit their ability to take up work, 78% stated that this is because they can only work part-time.
- More than half of adults (53%) arriving in the UK said they experienced difficulties accessing private rented accommodation in the UK. Most struggled because they had no credit history (69%), no guarantor or references (50%), or because they could not afford to rent with their own income (45%).
- Majority of adults (61%) are employed or self-employed.
- 36% of those in employment were in full-time work, of which almost all (94%) indicated that this was their preferred working pattern. On the other hand, 18% of those in employment, undertook part-time work, where over half of those (58%) stated they would prefer to work full-time.
- Some displaced people from Ukraine in the UK that have found employment end up in lower-paid employment sectors, and may be overqualified for the roles they hold when compared to the previous role held when employed in Ukraine. This therefore has a link to lower socioeconomic circumstances. The majority (68%) do not work in the same sector as they did in Ukraine. Respondents were asked what sector they currently work in, and their preferred sector. Although 23% of those employed worked in hospitality, only 6% wanted to work in this sector.
- Most adults (72%) have applied for a job in the UK since arriving.
- Of these, over half (57%) experienced difficulties in applying, with the most common problems being: English language skills making it difficult to apply (32%), not knowing how to write CVs in the UK (10%), and lack of IT skills (10%).
- When asked if having some help with applying for jobs in the UK would be beneficial to them, 38% of all adults thought it would; they mainly asked for support with interview preparation (67%), job searching (61%), and getting qualifications recognised in the UK (60%).
- The Ukrainian Consul provided evidence to the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee in January 2023, highlighting the barriers faced by displaced people from Ukraine in accessing employment, skills recognition and housing.

The findings reported in the Homelessness in Scotland: 2022-23 statistical publication show that between April 2022 and March 2023, 17 local authorities

reported 275 homelessness applications from Ukrainian displaced households. This is 0.7% of all homelessness applications received in Scotland in 2022-23 (39,006).

Therefore, on the basis of this evidence, the strategy recognises the importance of holistic integration for displaced people from Ukraine. The strategy acknowledges the barriers highlighted by the evidence – access to housing, ESOL, recognition of qualifications in the UK, and education.

The findings reported in the Scottish Government Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2019-22 publication, show that:

- It is estimated that 24% of children were living in relative poverty after housing costs in 2019-22. Before housing costs, it is estimated that 22% of were in relative poverty.
- Relative poverty for working-age adults has been broadly stable since the nineties, at 21% after housing costs, and 18% before housing costs.
- The relative poverty rate after housing costs for pensioners was 15% in 2019-22. Before housing costs, 16% of pensioners were in relative poverty.
- In the last 15 years, the youngest households (household heads aged 16-24) have been consistently more likely to be in relative poverty compared to older households.
- The poverty rate was highest for single mothers (36%) and single childless men (36%). The poverty rate for single childless women was 30%.

The findings reported in the Homelessness in Scotland: 2022-23 statistical publication show that:

- there were 39,006 homelessness applications recorded in 2022-23. This is an increase of 9% compared to 2021-22 (35,759) and has surpassed 2019-20 (37,053).
- there was a total of 29,652 open homelessness cases at 31 March 2023; an increase of 15% compared to 31 March 2022 (25,731)
- 32,242 households assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness (intentional or unintentional)

Views expressed by hosts and guests in interviews conducted in late 2022 and early 2023 showed that:

- those reporting insufficient space/privacy in host/temporary accommodation and challenges finding social housing were more likely to have travelled with dependents (under 18s and/or older relatives).
- few interviewees were considering private rental as an option when they moved out of temporary/host accommodation. Reasons participants mentioned for seeking social housing rather than private rental included: difficulty finding private rental properties, meeting requirements for renting (such as finding guarantors) and the high cost of renting. A number of hosts

interviewees expressed concern that private rental would not be affordable nor accessible to their guests.

- Some interviewees had found or were positive about the prospect of finding employment similar to the work they'd undertaken in Ukraine, however others were less confident about the prospect of doing so and a number of interviewees who were in employment had taken lower skilled and lower paid jobs than those they had held in Ukraine.
- Gaining employment – to enable them to move out of temporary/host accommodation and live independently – was a priority for many interviewees, however employment (and the pressure to find employment) was also reported by some to put a strain on their wellbeing and as a barrier to accessing trauma and mental health support.

Summary of assessment findings:

The high-level priorities identified in the strategy have been co-developed in consultation with our delivery partners COSLA and the Scottish Refugee Council, taking into account the lived experience of people in Scotland who have been displaced from Ukraine. While there are no specific actions set out in the paper, the five priorities include important consideration of how to help reduce potential inequalities of outcome, including:

- promote a consistent approach to integration support for all displaced people from Ukraine, learning and building from the experience of integration of other refugee groups in Scotland.
- The importance of parity of offer between displaced people from Ukraine and other groups of people with unmet needs, especially in housing
- Taking a New Scots approach to wider integration to help ensure that displaced people from Ukraine in Scotland have the opportunity to live full and independent lives
- The importance of taking into account the lived experience of displaced people from Ukraine to help shape policy going forward. One of the mechanisms for doing this, the Stakeholder Reference Group, has been highlighted in the paper. This group is made up of representatives who have personal experience or work with displaced people from Ukraine who are on a low income since their arrival in the UK.

Future policy changes and actions in line with the paper will need to be developed and may require more detailed impact assessments to be undertaken. In doing so, the Scottish Government will remain in close collaboration with key stakeholders to ensure that the views and experiences of displaced Ukrainians are duly considered and the impacts of any potential actions are observed before implementation.

Sign off:

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