

Item No. N/A	Classification: Open	Date: 19 May 2023	Decision Taker: Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Education & Refugees
Report title:		Award of grant funding to Beam Up Limited to provide services supporting access into employment and private rented sector accommodation for guests under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All wards	
From:		Director of Communities	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Education & Refugees approves the award of grant funding to Beam Up Limited for the period of 1 year to cover the cost of providing services to Homes for Ukraine guests to enable their access to employment and accommodation within the private rented sector.
2. The grant will fund £150,000 to cover the costs of initial one to one support. There will also be an additional a payment-by-results element, with the Council paying Beam £2,000 for every private sector tenancy signed to provide additional 12 months of support to help sustain the tenancy (this will amount to an additional £100,000 if all 50 households are able to sign private sector tenancies).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. The UK Government has as a response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine put in place different visa schemes that would allow Ukrainian nationals to enter, or if already in the UK, extend their stay.
4. Under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme private individuals in the UK can sign up to sponsor a visa application for a Ukrainian “guest”. The sponsor is expected to commit up to providing the visa applicant household with accommodation for at least 6 months without being able to require rent to be paid. In return, the host receives monthly Thank-You-Payments for a maximum of 24 months. Guests from Ukraine are given up to three years leave to remain and their length of stay in the UK is uncertain linked to the uncertainty over the length of the War in Ukraine.
5. Local authorities are expected to undertake suitability checks of sponsors within their catchment area. These checks include DBS checks,

safeguarding checks, property inspections to assess the safety and suitability of accommodation offered and welfare checks with Ukrainian guests/households as soon as they have arrived in the borough. Local authorities are also expected to establish eligibility for and distribute the monthly Thank-You-Payments for hosts.

6. As of April 2023 Southwark Council has welcomed almost 500 guests into Southwark, 400 of which around remain within the scheme. In most cases guest have now been with their hosts for longer than the 6 month commitment that hosts were originally asked to make and while we have seen extraordinary generosity in the numbers of Southwark residents that have come forward to offer their homes to Ukrainian guests there are some who are unable to sustain this beyond the initial 6 month commitment.

Staying with a host as a guest is a temporary solution pending a more stable solution. The most realistic move-on solution for guests into stable accommodation is to access the private rental market. However media reports and experience on the ground suggests that Ukrainian guests in the UK struggle to access the private rental market.

7. Guests under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme have recently arrived in the UK and consequently have no previous rental history in the UK. Due to the lack of rental history in the UK they are not attractive tenants for private landlords who are looking for stable and reliable rental income.
8. As per the survey Experiences of Homes for Ukraine scheme sponsors follow-up data, UK, conducted by the Office for National Statistics, 81% of hosts advised they have encountered barriers when supporting their guests to look for private rented accommodation. 69% advised a barrier was that guests cannot afford to rent privately, 51% that guests cannot provide valid references, 64% that guests cannot provide a guarantor, 54% that guests cannot provide necessary financial documents (e.g. proof of earnings/tax history) and 55% that guests cannot afford the deposit or other up-front payments.
9. Across the United Kingdom, there has been a 44 percent increase in the number of Ukrainians presenting as homeless between February and March 2023. This indicates the escalating and national nature of the problem.
10. This level of need has been replicated within the Homes for Ukraine Scheme in Southwark. An increasing number of Ukrainian guests are presenting with the need to access private sector accommodation with a significant number (currently 20 households) needing to be placed in temporary accommodation while longer term accommodation is sought.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homelessness-management-information-ukrainian-nationals-england>

11. Beam Up Limited (referred to as Beam for short) is a social enterprise that supports Ukrainian guests experiencing or at risk of homelessness into employment and private rented sector housing. Beam partners with councils to provide innovative sustained support by simultaneously removing the financial barriers that prevent Ukrainian guests from starting work and accessing the private rented sector and providing wraparound caseworker support.
12. Beam is funded jointly by councils and an online funding model. Beam's model facilitates engagement from service-users, empowering individuals to share their story and join an online community of supporters and peers who offer confidence-building messages of encouragement.
13. Beam is commissioned by over 70 local authorities across the UK, including Newcastle, Aberdeen, Manchester, Leicester, and over 75% of local authorities across London. Over the last 12 months, Beam has been commissioned directly by Homes for Ukraine teams in Kingston upon Thames, Waltham Forest, Islington, Enfield, Redbridge, Fareham, Eastleigh and Haringey to support Ukrainian guests into stable employment and housing.
14. Within Southwark, Beam has a proven track record of success - it has been partnered with Southwark Council since 2019 to support rough sleepers into work and housing. Since 2019, Beam has raised over £325,000 for Southwark residents affected by rough sleeping. Through Beam, 77 Southwark residents have started work and 45 Southwark residents have signed tenancies with 92% of these residents sustaining their tenancies beyond 6 months.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

15. The Homes for Ukraine Scheme was set up by central government in response to the urgent needs of Ukrainian nationals in March 2022. Southwark Council moved quickly to mobilise an urgent cross departmental response which includes:
 - Conducting DBS checks on all adults members of a hosts household
 - Conducting safeguarding checks on all potential hosts
 - Conducting accommodation safety and suitability checks on all hosting accommodation
 - Conducting welfare checks on all Ukrainian guests that arrive in Southwark
 - Providing £200 grant for each arriving Ukrainian guest
 - Providing one to one advice and support to Ukrainian guests to help them resettle in Southwark
 - Liaising with hosts to address any issues that arise
 - Providing active hosts with monthly Thank You payments.

16. Since the start of the Scheme 1018 Ukrainian guests and 538 hosts have signed up to the Homes for Ukraine Scheme in Southwark. Of these 503 guests have arrived in the borough and been sponsored by 296 Southwark based hosts.
17. The Scheme has now been running for just over 12 months. Hosts were initially asked to make a minimum commitment to house guests for 6 months, however most guests are staying in the UK beyond this 6 month period and they have been granted Leave to Remain for a up to 3 years. Many hosts are unable to host beyond the initial 6 month commitment and even in cases where they are able to do so many guests seek to become more independent and are keen to secure their own housing.
18. The existing high level of demand on housing services means that there is a shortage of support to help Ukrainian guests access homes within the private sector.
19. This new pilot project in Southwark would see Beam work with 50 Ukrainian households who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The aim is to support service-users into secure, well-paid work and/or private sector tenancies.
20. The council will fund £150,000 upfront, which covers Beam's running costs.
21. In addition, the pilot has a payment-by-results element, with the council paying Beam £2,000 for every private sector tenancy signed. If 100% of service-users (50) are supported into tenancies the payment-by-results cost would be £100,000 taking the maximum total cost of the pilot to £250,000. The payment-by-results element of the payment will be released once a service user has signed a tenancy agreement with a private sector landlord. Beam will supply the council with confirmation of the tenancy agreement to enable payment and provide the service user with 12 months of support to help sustain the tenancy.
22. Based on an average fundraising campaign value of £4,000 with 50 service-users, the total investment raised for Ukrainian service-users through Beam will be £200,000. This will all be funded by crowd-funding donations.
23. Southwark Council's current costs are, on average, £1,142 for a household in Temporary Accommodation for one month. The average stay for a household, when placed in Temporary Accommodation, is 22 months, equating to an average spend of £25,117.
24. Beam's 89.2% average success rate in preventing homelessness, would mean that Southwark Council's estimated average savings per homeless prevention as a result of preventing further Temporary Accommodation spending are £2,713 per household.

25. Assuming Beam supports 20 Ukrainian households in Temporary Accommodation and 30 Ukrainian households at risk of homelessness into PRS accommodation, Southwark Council would save an estimated £502,340 on Temporary Accommodation spending and £81,390 on prevention spending. The return on investment of the partnership would be £3.13 per £1 spent, see below.

	(£)
Maximum Contract Cost	250,000
Value of Crowd-funding Donations	200,000
Cost Savings for Southwark Council	583,730
Return on Investment, per £1 spent	3.13

26. Beam's Responsibilities & Support will be:

- Beam engages with the Homes for Ukraine Team and other, identified local partners who can refer Ukrainian guests in Southwark who may be suitable for the pilot
- Beam caseworkers identify appropriate employment courses and employment routes through strengths-based assessments via creating a personal employment budget for each service-user with all funding requirements
- Beam caseworkers understand affordability and property requirements, plus housing costs needs, focused on sustaining a tenancy
- Beam operate a website that allows the public to fund employment training, housing costs and other related costs for service-users
- Increase awareness with the Southwark community to grow local donations for service users through targeted marketing and promotion
- Paying the suppliers for budgeted items from the funds raised on the website
- Providing intensive 1-2-1 support to service-users to support them into employment, such as CV preparation and interview practice
- Providing support for service-users to secure PRS tenancies, including training on using online housing websites and tools, top tips for viewings, housing paperwork support and all safety checks
- Provide support to service-users moving into PRS tenancies, helping with setting up direct debits and bills, dealing with repair issues and managing landlord-tenant disputes
- Providing ongoing support for 3 months after a service-user starts work and for 12 months after a service-user signs a tenancy for the private rented sector.

Monitoring, outcomes and impact

27. BEAM will be required to provide the following data each quarter:

- A summary description of the Funded Activities provided, such as the number of advice sessions delivered, number of people supported and types of casework undertaken
 - Summary information regarding the full costs of providing the Funded Activities
 - Evidence of the benefits users gain from the Funded Activities
 - A summary of any problems or issues that they have come across in delivering the Funded Activities
28. The pilot will be also be continuously monitored through Beam data collection shared through a dashboard that will display the impact of Beam's intervention upon the Southwark referrals. This will be supported by regular monitoring meetings between Beam and the council. Beam will work in conjunction with Homes for Ukraine to reach desired Temporary Accommodation move-on and prevention outcomes. The operational arrangements will be designed between all respective services and will be confirmed in a service-level agreement.
29. The pilot will be reviewed towards the end of the initial 12 months to determine if it's been successful and whether there is funding to allow it to continue.

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

30. In carrying out their functions, public authorities must have due regard to the different needs of different groups in their areas. An initial assessment of this award of funding is that it is intended to have a positive impact on Ukrainian guests under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme in Southwark.
31. Migrants are fully protected under the Equality Act 2010. While not being named specifically in the Act, migrants are protected under the characteristic of 'race and ethnicity (including colour, nationality, ethnic and national origins)'. They are also, as any other member of the population, eligible for protection under all other characteristics.
32. Migrants are disproportionately affected by inequality relating to all the protected characteristics. Guest under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme often lack language skills and knowledge of British customs, culture and society that creates a combination of disadvantages that can further contribute to exclusion and deprivation.
33. This funding will have a positive impact on Ukrainian guests under the Homes for Ukraine scheme in Southwark by allowing them to have access to a specialist job and house-hunting service with a proven successful record of achievement. Securing work and/or a stable home will be a big step towards securing a safe and independent life in the UK. This will in turn act as a route out of dependency on benefits and emergency council support such as temporary accommodation.

Climate change implications

34. There are no immediate climate change implications to this decision.

Resource and Financial implications

35. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has provided grant funding to local authorities to cover the costs of the provision of support to Ukrainian guests under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. This includes the ability to enter into agreements with third parties for the provision of parts of this support. This Homes for Ukraine Scheme grant will be used to fund the proposed pilot project with Beam.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Assistant Chief Executive (Governance and Assurance)

36. The report recommends making a grant of up to £250,000 (£150,000 plus £2,000 per family placed in accommodation) to Beam Up Limited, a social enterprise organisation, for the period of 1 year to cover the cost of providing services to Homes for Ukraine guests to enable their access to employment and accommodation within the private rental sector. The general power of competence in section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 enables the council to do anything that individuals generally may do and these proposals are all matters that would be covered by this power.
37. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, in making this decision, the Cabinet member must comply with the public equality duty which requires there to be due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
38. The community impact statement in paragraphs 31-34 clarifies that there will be positive impacts on individuals with protected characteristics arising from the provision of this grant and the assistance that will be provided as a result.
39. The provision of this grant is an executive function. Grants to voluntary organisations over £2,500 have been delegated to the Individual Cabinet member by the Leader in Part 3D of the Council's constitution and in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000. Although the granting of financial support to any external community or voluntary organisation in excess of £10,000 is normally a key decision, this would not apply to those organisations from which the council commissions services which it will effectively be doing by making this grant.

Strategic Director of Finance (FIN1365 - JB)

40. The report requests cabinet member approval for the award of grant funding to Beam Up Limited for a period of 1 year to cover the cost of providing services to Homes for Ukraine guests to enable their access to employment and accommodation within the private rental sector.
41. Paragraph 2 notes the structure of the grant funding, £150,000 for the provision of services and a payment-by-results element of £2,000 for every private sector tenancy signed to provide 12 months of support to help sustain the tenancy, up to a value of £100,000.
42. Paragraph 36 notes the funding will be sourced from the central government grant provided under the Homes for Ukraine support programme. The grant allows for entry into agreements with third parties for the provision of parts of this support.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
N/A	

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Stephen Douglass, Director of Communities	
Report Author	Mekdes Alemayehu, Community Support Manager	
Version	Final	
Dated	4 May 2023	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistant Chief Executive (Governance and Assurance)	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	18 May 2023	