



Homes for Ukraine Newsletter

From charities, partners, colleagues, and members of the public we have received some wonderful compliments and good news stories to share with you this week as well as our regular updates on progress. The generosity and determination of all involved to ease the burden for fleeing or sheltering Ukrainians is inspiring and heartwarming.

Compliments

- 📧 *"Thanks for the very quick response, and for putting our minds at rest. And thank you, too, for the fantastic work you and your team are doing under difficult conditions. It is very much appreciated"*
- 📧 *"Thank you for your prompt reply. I have to confess the speed and efficiency of the system has caught me out, as I thought I would have a week or so to sort these issues out before being contacted. It's brilliant and I will catch up. 😊"*
- 📧 *"I would like to record that I am very impressed with the council's response as I only helped our guests complete their visa application on Saturday and they are setting off on a 12 hour train journey across Romania to attend a Visa Application Centre on Thursday to complete the formalities."*

Good News Stories

Ukrainian Family Art Exhibition

One of our families produced an art exhibition for the Bellevue arts festival, please see attached link to the article:

<https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/local-hubs/shrewsbury/2022/06/21/ukraine-familys-poignant-goodbye-and-journey-across-europe-moves-shrewsbury-gallery-visitors/>

Outdoor Concert in Aid of Ukrainian Refugees

Ukrainian musicians sang their national anthem in a specially formed choir accompanied by Shrewsbury Symphony Orchestra in an outdoor concert at the castle this week in aid of Shropshire Supports Refugees.

<https://www.myshrewsbury.co.uk/blog/ukrainian-musicians-delight-audience-at-castle-concert/>

National Open Forum Conference

Amanda Jones, CEO of The Shropshire Supports Refugees Team, hosted a National conference in supporting refugees and migrants (Open forum events) in Manchester, flying the flag for Shropshire's resettlement program



Yoga Classes



SSR have been funding an extremely popular yoga class led by a Ukrainian lady, Olesia at Jenna Blair's studio- extremely good feedback from at least 12 Ukrainian ladies that attend regularly.



Congratulations Amanda!

And finally, huge congratulations to Amanda Jones, CEO of The Shropshire Supports Refugees Team, who was awarded a rotary international peace award at the Eisteddfod final competition concert. Nominated by Cllr Mike Lade from Oswestry town Council. Amanda said she was 'flattered and excited to spend the evening with Terry Waite and his wife at this prestigious venue.'



Headline Figures - Laura

- As of 20.07.2022 we are now expecting over 800 individual Ukrainian guests into the county. So far 375 have arrived across 166 host families.
- Personally, I think the response of Shropshire residents in hosting Ukrainian guests has been phenomenal and it makes me very proud to work and live in this wonderful county.
- This morning I met with 2 hosts to learn more about their experience and what information they were given. I am aware that at times hosts have been unsure of the various stages they and their guests have needed to go through and I am determined to make this clearer and easier now we have got into the rhythm of the scheme.
- I am still in the process of recruiting to a team and hope to update you on that soon. 😊
- We will also ensure there is information about the summer activities available for school children in the next edition.

DBS Checks

- Over 480 DBS applications have been input on to the system
- 227 have been verified and are going through the relevant checks
- 21 have been archived (failed housing check, were refugees, pulled out of the scheme)
- 35 fully completed and archived in line with GDPR (the certificates have been seen)
- 131 waiting to be verified (this is individuals stats but most of these are family groups and rob is booked up solid for the next 2 weeks already to do verifications)
- 25 have completed applications but have failed to send through the correct documents need for video verification we have contacted them and are waiting for them to send through the correct documents
- 34 waiting for people to send through documents for us to check but have completed their application forms
- 18 haven't completed their application links



Payments

To date, we have made 110 host gift payments and 349 payments to Ukrainian guests. We are aware there has been a delay with some host gift payments and we are working hard behind the scenes to resolve any issues with these.

Education

As of Wednesday 13 July 2022, 111 Ukrainian children had secured a place in a Shropshire education setting – 10 in early years provision, 54 in primary schools and 47 in secondary schools. Of these, 86 have come through the Homes for Ukraine route, while 25 have come through the Ukraine Families route. It should be noted that the current Government position is that the schools admitting refugees through the Ukraine Families route do not receive funding to support their education.

The Department for Education has still yet to confirm the funding arrangements for schools admitting Ukrainian refugees. It is hoped this will be provided before the school term ends next week as many schools are enquiring about when they will receive education funding.

ESOL - English for Speakers of Other Languages

Hubs around the county continue to expand their programmes of classes and conversation groups.

120 learners are now registered with Shropshire Supports Refugees for lessons in the Shrewsbury Community Hub or online, with more signing up every week. There are now 20 hours of classes and conversation groups running per week. There will be a reduced timetable over the school holiday period, with more emphasis on family activities, and return with an expanded programme in September. New learners can register at the Hub between 12:00 - 4:00 on Mondays or 12:00 - 1:00 on Fridays, or contact ginny.sales@ealforlearning.co.uk

Community Support

Transport

There had been a slight backlog with issuing travel certificates due to staffing issues. However, we are pleased to confirm that this has now been resolved and all travel certificates for the Ukrainian guests meeting the criteria (i.e. over 16) have been posted out to host families.

Any new enquiries are going via the Passenger Transport Group and details are being checked against the current list, and again if criteria is met, a travel certificate will be issued and posted to host family. To date, 155 travel certificates have been issued.



Activities in the Hub

The Shrewsbury hub has become busier and busier as lots of guests attending English classes now, and we still see new guests coming for support every day. We have a minimum of 50 people come through the door every day now. The donations unit is still being used daily by new visitors and visitors that have been here for a while.

Landau have been attending every Wednesday and have got people into work and many many Ukrainians have already got themselves into work one way or another.

The Housing team have had a presence in the hub helping with hosts and guests who can no longer live together for a variety of reasons. We are in the process of setting up formal and informal mediation to assist with some of the breakdowns.

We still have our regular coffee morning on a Friday which is very well attended.

Two young ladies from Ukraine have developed a wonderful newsletter for the Ukrainians in the hub forwarding all the latest news straight from inside Ukraine.

One of our Ukrainian Guests is a very talented Masseur and therapist, so she has been offering her friends treatments in a new treatment room developed upstairs.

We have provided support and space for a young man who is currently not living with a guest and needed quiet spaces to finish his Masters degree exams.

The hub is used by people living in temporary accommodation where they can make food, relax, network and access all the services that the hub has to access

Online and Remote Support

The 2 WhatsApp groups are heavily used, over 100 people in both groups one for the hosts and one for the guests and we ensure that our online resource pool the "Padlet " is regularly updated and sent out to everybody who wants it.

A total of 13 satellite hubs have been developed around the county - The satellite support hubs are coming on nicely with lots of effort being put in, the next few months will be all about focusing on developing these to their maximum capacity to support the local Ukrainians in the area. We are extremely thankful to all the volunteers who have stepped up to set up and run these hubs.

SSR and Energize are partnering up to be able to offer practical and financial support to the hubs and Shropshire Cycle hub are revving up to be able to deliver bikes for Ukrainians across the county. There have been several wonderful events that our Ukrainian Guests have been participating in both the running of and attending.



Volunteers

The Shropshire infrastructure partnership have been helping us to process several new volunteers who have then been working tirelessly to ensure all guests who come to the hub are welcomed warmly and their needs are attended to.

Our new hub coordinator and resettlement worker, Suzanne has been supporting guests that are needing emergency situations sorted out or extra support because they are living in hotels. Her fluent Russian has come in very useful!

Employment Options-ENABLE

We have received some funding to put together a dedicated team to support the refugees with employment support. We are in the process of getting the posts advertised and will share the application links when they are live.

The team will consist of the following

- 1 senior who will manage the team and the day to day communications between the hubs and other stakeholders.
- 1.5 training officers to undertake training which will cover topics to support refugees to prepare for employment
- 2 employment officers to help with the employment support, and training and education if this is the right route, and they can even help with job retention if anyone is currently in work but struggling
- 2 experts by experience. These roles are intended for people who have lived experience in the related programme, in this case those who are refugees and have experienced similar things to our clients and potential clients. They would support in the training courses, with community integration and possibly help with any language barriers between our clients and our staff.

Further details to follow once the adverts are live on the Shropshire Council website.

Leisure and Culture

Free family events to celebrate the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.

On 18th July the Queen's Baton Relay visited Shrewsbury and on 23rd July it will be in Bridgnorth to mark the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. When the Relay visits Bridgnorth on 23 July there's a Community Sports Fun Day with loads of opportunities to try different sports and join in the fun in the Severn Park. Both events are perfect for families and tickets are free but must be booked in advance.



Shropshire%20Activities%20updated%2069



Website & Comms

- Website review of FAQs to ensure information is up to date.
- Added ESOL (English courses in Shropshire) info to the education section and the hosts' page
- News article added regarding the rules for receiving £350 gift payments
- Information regarding hosting families and young people added to the website

