Leicestershire County Council Homes for Ukraine and Ukraine Permission Extension 'Thank you payment' policy – 1 January 2027 onwards

10 November 2026

Background

A core part of the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship visa scheme is a monthly thank you payment to those hosting Ukrainians fleeing war who are not in their family. This document outlines Leicestershire County Council's approach to Thank you payments.
Throughout this document the term host is used to identify the person who is providing accommodation – they may or may not be the sponsor for their Ukrainian guest's visa.

This policy applies to hosting from 1 January 2027 onwards.

Eligibility for thank you payments

Thank you payments will be paid to eligible hosts for periods they have been hosting eligible guests on the scheme. Eligible guests are:

- Guests who hold Homes for Ukraine (Sponsorship) visas, or
- Guests who have applied for their first Ukraine Permission Extension (UPE) scheme visa, but not yet had a decision, having previously held a Homes for Ukraine (Sponsorship) visa.
- Guests who hold their first Ukraine Permission Extension (UPE) scheme visa, having previously held a Homes for Ukraine (Sponsorship) visa.

Once guests have had 18 months on a UPE visa they are no longer eligible guests for thank you payments.

Guests who move from Homes for Ukraine (Sponsorship) visas to visas other than UPE (such as spousal visa, skilled work visa, study visas or others) are not considered eligible guests on the scheme.

Hosts are only eligible for thank you payments where the following are true:

- The property for hosting has passed a property inspection for suitability
- The host and any resident over 16 in the house guests will be hosted in have completed and passed DBS checks
- Safeguarding checks for the host and any resident over 16 have been completed and passed
- An eligible guest has arrived and stayed for more than 14 days (unless an emergency or rematch host) (see below).
- An initial welfare visit has been completed (where a guest has arrived and stayed for more than 14 days)
- At the point of claiming thank you payments at least one guest is not a close family member of the host
- Guests are not contributing to rent in any way (guests may be asked to contribute to household bills).

Where guests have been absent from a host property for 28 days or more, in line with national guidance, hosts will not be eligible for thank you payments for that period.

Where guests are regularly absent for periods during a month that add up to more than half the month, in line with national guidance, hosts will not be eligible for thank you payments for those months.

Exception: Rematches with early guest leaving / absence: Rematch hosts will be eligible for payments for periods of less than 14 days where all other criteria are met. Where rematched guests leave hosting temporarily for 28 to 42 days within their first 3 months with that host the host will be eligible for thank you payments for that period and does not have to record them as leaving and returning. (This exception has been put in place to encourage rematch hosts to host guests despite guests planned leave periods / unexpected leaving).

Making a claim for thank you payments

All hosts should notify the Council using the online Guest Arrival form when their guest arrives in their property, whether they wish to claim thank you payments or not. Hosts are able to identify on this if they do not wish to receive thank you payments.

Hosts make a claim for thank you payment for guests by using the online 'Guest Arrival' form to notify us of guests' arrival at the host property. In order to make a claim, hosts must:

- identify they wish to receive to receive thank you payments
- provide a copy bank statement in their name
- confirm arrival date for each guest
- verify whether each guest is a close family member or not (after 1 October 2024)
- Provide proof of eligibility of guests once the guests' Homes for Ukraine Visa ends.

Hosts should make a claim for thank you payments at the following points:

- When a guest arrives to a host for the first time
- When a guest arrives back to a host after a period where no thank you payment has been paid
- When any guests' initial Homes for Ukraine Visa ends and the guest is applying for UPE visa.

Each instance will be considered a new claim for Thank you payments.

In order to ensure thank you payments are paid appropriately and prevent overpayments hosts must notify the council as soon as possible:

- Whenever <u>any</u> of their guests leaves and is expected to be away for more than 28 days.
- Whenever a guest who left and was expected back does not return by 28 days
- Whenever <u>any</u> of their guests' visas change from a Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship visa
- If <u>any</u> guest becomes a close family member of the host

Hosts should use the online Guest arrival form in the first instance to make these notifications. If hosts have difficulty using the Guest Arrival form or are uncertain if their updates / notifications have been recorded on the form they should contact homesforukraine@leics.gov.uk.

If a host has not previously claimed thank you payments for an arrangement, and then decides they wish to claim thank you payments, thank you payments will only be paid from the month in which the host notifies the Council that they now wish to claim thank you payments.

Thank you payment amount

From 1 January 2027 Central Government provides £100 thank you payment per month per residential property where guests are hosted. In Leicestershire any hosting arrangement that starts

on or after 1 January 2027 will be paid thank you payments at the national rate of £100 per month. This includes guests who return to a host after a period away of more than 28 days.

In recognition of higher payment amounts on the national scheme prior to January 2027 and from feedback from hosts Leicestershire County Council have decided to up monthly thank you payments for hosting arrangements where guests are already present before 1 January 2027. Thank you payments will be topped up by £250 to £350 per month for 1 January 2027 onwards. Where the council has rematched a guest to a host to prevent homelessness that host may also be eligible for a top-up of thank you payments to £350 per month. Top ups are provided in order to prevent homelessness in winter and secure ongoing hosting while guests consider and prepare for return to Ukraine or Independent living. These top-ups will only continue where the Council has Homes for Ukraine tariff funding available to pay for this top-up.

The scheme offers no other top-ups or payments to hosts locally. The scheme allows hosts to ask guests to make reasonable contributions to costs (other than rent). These should be clearly outlined to guests what the contribution relates to, and ideally with bills information supporting the level of contribution. These contributions should be agreed with guests.

Payments of thank you payments are made based on calendar months.

Where the first or last month of hosting is less than half a calendar month (i.e. guest arrives after 16th of the month or leaves before the 16th of the month) the host will be paid a pro-rata of the thank you payment for the period with a daily rate calculated on the basis of hosting for one year.

Where the first or last month of hosting is half a calendar month or more (i.e. guest arrives before 17th of the month or leaves after the 15th of the month) the host will be paid a full month thank you payment.

Where a host has one set of guests leave and another set arrive within 14 days they will be eligible for thank you payments for the whole month.

Payments emergency hosting and short-term rematches: Hosts may be paid 'Thank you payments' as Emergency hosts where they have agreed to host guests for a short period at very short notice. In this case emergency hosts will be paid for periods of less than half a month as follows:

- Up to 7 days - £150
- Up to 8-14 days - £350

These payment amounts will also apply where a guest has been rematched to an eligible host, but left within the first 14 days, where this is not related to unsuitable behaviour of the host. (This exception has been put in place to provide a better experience for guests who need to leave hosts quickly and reduce costs of temporary accommodation).

How payments are made

Payments are made monthly in arrears by bank transfer based on calendar months. Once hosts have provided bank details they will be set up as suppliers in the Council payment systems. This normally takes between one and two weeks to complete necessary processing and checks. Once eligible hosts are set up as suppliers any payments due for months already hosted will be paid. This normally takes between one and two weeks from supplier set up for processing and payment. Regular payments will be made by the 15th of the month for the previous calendar month.

Overpayments

The Council is unable to claim 'Thank you payments' back from the government unless hosts are eligible. Where a host has been paid for a period they were not hosting or were not eligible to host

guests, the host must repay any overpaid thank you payments to the Council. The Council will seek to recover any overpayment made in line with national guidance and the Leicestershire Homes for Ukraine debt management plan.

Exception: Unexpected extended absence of guests: Where guests left a host arrangement temporarily, were expected back within 28 days, but did not return within 28 days overpayment for that period will be waived. This will only be waived once per guest group. (This exception has been put in place in line with discretion on the national scheme and on the basis that hosts were living and planning ahead as though they were hosting, as they expected guests back).

Considerations when applying this policy

As of 1 April 2025 the circumstances of each case will be taken into account when applying this policy and exceptions may be made where this is essential to:

- Support guests with ongoing accommodation
- Support retention of hosts for further hosting or rematching
- Support a positive experience for hosts or guests.