



Listening Learning Leading

The Rt Hon Tom Pursglove MP
Minister of State
Legal Migration and the Border

Councillor David Rouane
Leader of the Council

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19 March 2024

Dear Mr Pursglove,

Ukrainian refugees' route to long term settlement in England

I am writing on behalf of South Oxfordshire District Council regarding your recent letter on 19 February 2024 that set out various changes to Ukrainian schemes. Your department announced that existing three-year Ukraine scheme visa holders will only be able to apply for permission to remain in the UK for an additional 18 months. Under the new Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme however, there is no mechanism at present for people from Ukraine to gain leave to remain in the UK.

Since the start of the Homes for Ukraine scheme in March 2022, 332 South Oxfordshire residents have opened their homes to 772 Ukrainian guests. Currently there are 163 residents in South Oxfordshire hosting 247 guests from Ukraine. South Oxfordshire District Council has also supported 136 households into independent accommodation.

Without the ability to gain indefinite leave to remain, Ukrainians living in our district may be forced to return to Ukraine, despite the war continuing. This has caused distress to many Ukrainians residing in South Oxfordshire. The short extension of the visa scheme and the lack of a route through to achieve indefinite leave to remain status will also cause real practical difficulties - creating problems for securing employment and private sector tenancies.

On behalf of Ukrainian guests living in sanctuary in South Oxfordshire, we implore the Government to urgently provide longer term certainty around their ability to make the UK their home, in line with other refugee protection schemes.

We request that the Government provides a legal route for people from Ukraine to gain the right to permanent settled status, thus having the ability to apply for indefinite leave to remain in the UK, or by another legal mechanism.

We remain committed to doing everything we can to help and welcome people displaced by war and persecution as we continue to coordinate and deliver support in partnership across Oxfordshire for people from across the government schemes.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely



Cllr David Rouane
Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council