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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and
Communities and Minister for Intergovernmental
Relations
PSMichaelGove@levellingup.gov.uk

By email only
15 December 2022

Dear Michael,

This letter is sent jointly from the Scottish Government's Minister with Special Responsibility for Refugees from Ukraine and the Welsh Government's Minister for Social Justice.

We write jointly following yesterday's announcement about changes to UK Government funding to support the arrival of Ukrainians.

The changes announced amount to a reduction in funding available to help people fleeing Putin's illegal war in Ukraine settle into a new home. In the face of continued and acute need, it is counter-productive and short-sighted to cut vital funding available to deliver public services to the most vulnerable. It will place local authorities under extreme and unacceptable pressure during an unprecedented cost of living crisis.

Those arriving from Ukraine deserve the same care and support which we provide to those arriving from Afghanistan or through the UK Resettlement Scheme. The approach and funding model used under those schemes is internationally recognised as good practice and supported by each of our Governments. The decision to undermine the success of this safe and legal route to the UK is at odds with recent UK Government claims about a generous approach.

Whilst we welcome the additional payments to volunteer hosts, they are needed now – not after 12 months of hosting. Many hosts have told us that without additional financial support, the cost of living crisis means they will not be able to continue to provide this exceptional service. Our public services are under immense housing strain and further, avoidable, homelessness presentations will mean more and longer stays in inadequate hotel

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accommodation, as well as increasing community tensions. It is therefore vital that all volunteer hosts receive this uplift immediately.

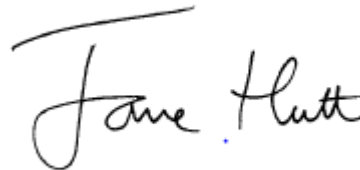
We note that the £500m housing support fund is for England-only and from existing departmental budgets. Due to the costs of the super sponsor route, which are not replicated in England, we have already made available more than the proportionate amount in supporting Ukrainian housing needs in our nations and we do not have the fiscal headroom to allocate additional sums in a similar manner. Additionally, the decision to deviate from a traditional Year 2 tariff to support Ukrainians arriving in our nations, will have a disproportionate effect in Scotland and Wales due to our larger share of arrivals. In our view, the £500m should be considered as a new budget allocation, with consequential funds coming to Scotland and Wales.

We therefore ask that you urgently revisit this decision, which was made without appropriate consultation and engagement with Devolved Governments, and to meet with us quickly to find a more effective way forward.

This letter is copied to Councillor Andrew Morgan, Leader of the Welsh Local Government Association and Councillor Shona Morrison, President of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities. We have also copied this letter to the Conveners of the Scottish Parliament Social Justice and Social Security Committee and Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee, and to the Chair of the Senedd Local Government and Housing Committee.



NEIL GRAY



JANE HUTT

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