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More cash for Ukraine refugee hosts

31 October 2022

Epsom Refugee Network welcomes the promised increase in cash to those local residents who take into their homes individuals and families who have had to flee Ukraine. It is hoped the extra money will attract more hosts in an increasingly difficult situation. **Jo Sherring**, leader of the Epsom Refugee Network, told Epsom and Ewell Times: “As we launch an appeal for new sponsors in the area, we welcome the news of the increased thank you payments which we hope may encourage more families to consider offering a place of safety to a family fleeing Ukraine. We are also desperate to find sponsors for families who are already in the UK and are having to move on from their first sponsor and find a new host family. If you are thinking of hosting and have questions please, please get in touch”. www.epsomrefugeenetwork.org

Surrey County Council and local district and borough councils who are managing the “**Homes for Ukraine**” scheme locally have agreed an additional thank you payment, to be paid monthly to host families from end of November 2022 to March 2023. This is acknowledging that the financial circumstances faced by host families in Surrey, who welcomed Ukrainians into their homes, will have changed from the time they agreed to host Ukrainian families to our current economic situation in the UK.

Currently, host families are paid £350 a month for being sponsors, this payment will be increased by £250 to £600 a month from end of November 2022. This is to compensate for the rise in energy, food and fuel bills in this cost-of-living crisis. This applies to existing hosts who are already in receipt of thank you payments, and new hosts who complete all the checks satisfactorily going forward. This funding comes from DLUHC (**Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities**) via the County Council to the district and borough councils to pay the sponsors directly once they have passed all the relevant housing, DBS (**Disclosure and Barring Service**) and safeguarding checks.

Surrey County Council leader **Cllr Tim Oliver** said “We are forever grateful for the unerring warm welcome and support that communities, charities, and district and boroughs continue to offer our Ukrainian guests here in Surrey. But in particular to those sponsor families who have opened their homes up to welcome Ukrainian families to live alongside them and their families. As if this sacrifice were not enough, we now need to ensure that they are not being penalised financially and can continue to offer support as sponsors in this current economic climate. Unfortunately, the conflict in Ukraine continues and so there is still a need for host families. SCC has taken the decision to increase the thank you payments after fears many people wouldn’t be able to afford to extend their current six-month agreements as winter approaches and the cost-of-living bites.”

Additional reporting from Surrey County Council news.

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