

Nottinghamshire Homes for Ukraine Scheme

Sponsor Checks and Suitability Operational Guidance

19/08/2026

Background

1. The Homes for Ukraine Scheme (HFU) allows Ukrainian guests to be sponsored by UK residents and live and work in the UK for up to 18 months. It grants access to healthcare, benefits, employment support, education, and English language tuition.
2. The Council administers the HFU scheme on behalf of the Government (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government – MHCLG) and is required to conduct accommodation and safeguarding checks on all new applications to Nottinghamshire sponsors. These checks include:
 - a. Accommodation suitable
 - b. Accommodation exists
 - c. DBS check and Sponsor suitable
 - d. Guests have arrived in their accommodation
3. The Government's [guidance for sponsors](#) makes it clear that prospective sponsors/hosts will be subject to accommodation and welfare checks.
4. As established in the Government's [privacy notice](#), by signing up to be a sponsor on the Scheme, individuals agree to share their data with MHCLG, the Home Office and their local Council.
5. Councils are required to share the results of sponsor checks with MHCLG and the Home Office through the Government's 'Share' online system. Checks will be marked as 'passed', 'in progress' or 'failed' with supplementary comments added where appropriate. Should a check be marked as 'failed', the prospective guest(s) visas may be refused by the Home Office.

Initial Sponsor Contact

6. The Council's HFU team are notified of new sponsors through the Share system. The system is checked daily for new applications.
7. Once a new sponsor is identified, the corresponding Homes for Ukraine Delivery Officer will attempt to contact the sponsor by the phone number provided. As part of this phone call, the Delivery Officer will confirm:
 - a. That the sponsor is aware of the application and that it is genuine.
 - b. That the sponsor understands the terms and conditions of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.

- c. That the sponsor is consenting and genuinely intending to host the guest(s) for at least 6 months.
 - d. If the sponsor is considered 'close family' in relation to the guests. This is relevant for host payments as outlined [here](#).
 - e. The details of individuals living in the property including names, email addresses and ages. This is required for DBS checks ([see below](#)).
 - f. That the owner of the property has given consent for the accommodation to be used.
 - g. That the sponsor consents to being contacted by their District or Borough Council for the purposes of an accommodation check ([see below](#)).
8. Following the call, the sponsor will be provided with an email summary of the information and asked to keep the Delivery Officer updated with their guest(s)' travel plans.
9. There are several occurrences throughout the initial sponsor contact process that may lead to checks being marked as 'failed' on Share. These include, but are not limited to:
- a. A disconnected or non-responsive phone number.
 - b. A lack of response to email contact or dismissive responses lacking in information.
 - c. Contact that suggests a non-real or fictional sponsor.
 - d. The sponsor fails other checks as outlined below.
10. If a Homes for Ukraine Officer is unable to contact the sponsor within 10 working days of the application appearing on Share, the sponsor's checks may be marked as failed. Likewise, should a sponsor not progress with the required checks within 10 working days of initial contact, the sponsor's checks may be marked as failed.
11. Where possible, the HFU Delivery Officer will provide all sponsors with ample opportunity to respond to contact and initiate checks. The Council holds full discretion, however, in conducting checks and marking sponsors as unsuitable where necessary, as outlined [here](#).

Accommodation Suitable and Accommodation Exists

12. The accommodation suitable and accommodation exists checks are designed to ensure a prospective sponsor's property is suitable for the HFU guest(s) they intend to accommodate.
13. Nottinghamshire County Council holds service level agreements with District and Borough Council Environmental Health teams who conduct these checks on the County Council's behalf.
14. As part of these checks, Environmental Health Officers will assess:
- a. If the property exists and is within Nottinghamshire's boundaries.
 - b. If the property is residential and not a corporate premises.
 - c. If the bedroom(s) offered are large enough and suitable for the number of people accommodated and their corresponding ages & sex.
 - d. If the property has adequate facilities, e.g. water, heating, basic furniture for use by guests.
 - e. If the property is free from health and safety risks, e.g. working fire alarm, fire exits, mould.

15. This list is not exhaustive, and each District or Borough Council will conduct their own assessment of risk in line with environmental health considerations. Sponsors may read more around accommodation checks [here](#).
16. At the end of the accommodation check, the Environmental Health Officer will advise the sponsor of the outcome. Should mitigating actions be required, e.g. fitting of a fire alarm, sponsors must complete these within an appropriate timeframe, set by the Environmental Health Officer. Should a sponsor refuse to undertake mitigating actions, or is unable to complete these within the timeframe, the check will be marked as failed.
17. Environmental Health Officers hold full discretion in accommodation assessments and their outcome.

DBS Check and Sponsor Suitable

18. Government guidance states that all sponsors and corresponding household members above the age of 16 are required to undertake a DBS check.
19. The level of the DBS (Basic or Enhanced) will depend upon the guest(s) to be hosted. Should any guest(s) be under the age of 18, an Enhanced check will be required.
20. The Government outlines several situations where a sponsor may be subject to a Basic DBS check over an Enhanced DBS (and visa-versa). The Council will apply these rules in line with guidance outlined [here](#).
21. For sponsors that have spent significant time living outside of the UK, the Council may seek additional assurance to accompany the DBS check. This may include, for example, a reference letter from an employer.
22. If a DBS check discloses previous offences, The Council will take a balanced view on a case-by-case basis when judging the suitability of that individual (and their household) for the sponsorship role, considering factors such as:
 - a. The person's age at the time of the offence.
 - b. How long ago the offence took place.
 - c. The nature of the offence and its relevance to being a host.
 - d. What else is known about the person's conduct before or since the offence.
 - e. The relevance of the offence to the suitability of the proposed hosting arrangement.
23. The DBS check is only a part of the overall sponsor suitability assessment. When assessing prospective sponsors, the Council will also consider:
 - a. Evidence that the sponsor has a history of sponsoring guests who have never lived with them, or who have left before the 6-month expected period.
 - b. Hostile, aggressive, or inappropriate communication with Council staff or complaints or evidence of this from previous guests. These may be raised after the hosting arrangement has ended.
 - c. Identified patterns of repeated unsuitable behaviour.

- d. Concerns about the sponsor's character.
- e. Concerns about the sponsors' future plans that may impact upon a potential guest negatively.
- f. Previous host payment arrears or debts.
- g. Evidence that the sponsor may have charged previous guest(s) rent or is planning to.
- h. Evidence that the sponsorship may lead to a conflict of interest for parties within the household.
- i. Other relevant information known to the Council through internal records.

24. Councils have full discretion in determining how to conduct sponsor/host suitability checks and in making judgements about a sponsor/host's capacity to meet the required standards, including when there are major concerns. This includes concerns that the sponsor may not provide a safe or stable environment for a guest. Sponsors can read more [here](#).
25. Where the sponsor suitability assessment and/or DBS check requires further consideration, a panel will be convened between the Homes for Ukraine Programme Manager and the Communities Team Manager, alongside other colleagues as deemed necessary. This panel will assess the evidence gathered and make the overall decision on sponsor suitability.
26. Should a sponsor be determined to be unsuitable, this will be communicated to them in writing by the Homes for Ukraine Programme Manager. Information provided to the sponsor may be limited and is dependent on considerations of safeguarding, data protection and appropriate disclosure.
27. All sponsor suitability decisions are final and are not subject to an appeals process. Sponsors who have previously failed a check may only be subject to a new assessment if their circumstances have substantially changed. Otherwise, existing failed checks will apply to all future sponsorship applications.
28. A new sponsorship assessment does not require the Council to disregard relevant information previously known to it and earlier concerns may continue to be taken into account as part of any new assessment.

Guest(s) Arrived in Their Accommodation

29. The HFU team will be notified of guest(s) arrival in the United Kingdom through the Share system and/or sponsor notification.
30. The Council is required to visit all new arrivals within an appropriate timeframe (usually 10 working days) to gather necessary information from the guest and ensure their safe and integrated arrival into their sponsorship arrangement.
31. Sponsors have a responsibility to allow access to their property for the purpose of this check and future visits from the Council. Should a sponsor be unresponsive to requests for the arrival visit, their checks may be failed on the Share system and host payments withheld.
32. If the Council is unable to verify genuine guest(s) arrivals, this not only creates a safeguarding concern for the guest(s) but suggests that the arrangement was fraudulent with no intention to

host for the minimum 6-month period. This will factor into any future assessments of sponsor suitability as outlined in paragraph 23.

Conclusion

33. Sponsor checks are an important part of the Homes for Ukraine process and ensure safe and suitable sponsorship placements for HFU guests. Their timely completion is crucial to the scheme's success. The Council holds overall discretion in sponsor checks and may fail a check at any stage of the process.

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