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Ukrainian Forced Migrants in Edinburgh: How the Homes for Ukraine Scheme Worked

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The article presents the in-deep analysis of the implementation the Homes for Ukraine Scheme (HFUS) in Scotland for Ukrainian forced migrants fleeing the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2022. The HFUS does not provide for official refugee[1] status in the UK but allows Ukrainians to seek asylum. The HFUS is unique, as it involves, in particular, the settlement of Ukrainian refugees in the same housing with their sponsors, which should contribute to the adaptation and assimilation of new residents in Scotland. Our interviews with Ukrainians and sponsors who hosted Ukrainians aimed to analyse the challenges faced by both groups involved in HFUS. The study aimed to explore the challenges faced by Ukrainians adapting to new conditions in Scotland, their self-identification in a new environment, and their future plans. The primary difficulties identified for Ukrainians in Scotland included limited English language proficiency, challenges in securing employment in their field, navigating unfamiliar systems, and instability hindering long-term planning. Conversely, Scots highlighted challenges related to the lack of clarity in the HFUS, in communication with local councils, and in understanding the consequences of using the scheme. Based on analysis of interviews and other open sources, the authors identified certain aspects that they believe should be considered in Scotland's migrant integration policy, in particular, the effectiveness of the HFUS and the work of state and volunteer organisations that assist Ukrainians and other forced migrants. Additionally, the authors suggest that the gathered data could inform policies for repatriating Ukrainian citizens once the conflict concludes.

Key words: Russian-Ukrainian war, forced migrants, temporary protection, accommodation, employability, precarious position.

Олійник Оксана, Олійник Анна. Українські вимушені мігранти в Единбурзі: як спрацювала схема Homes for Ukraine. У статті виконано аналіз досвіду впровадження схеми Homes for Ukraine (далі – HFUS) для вимушених українських мігрантів, які втікали від російсько-української війни у 2022 р. HFUS не передбачає офіційного статусу біженця у Великій Британії, але дає змогу українцям подавати заявки про надання притулку. HFUS є нетиповою, оскільки передбачає, зокрема, поселення українських біженців в одне житло зі своїми спонсорами, що мало би сприяти адаптації та асиміляції нових резидентів у Шотландії. Проведені

[1] More about status of refugees: UNHCR (2010).

авторами інтерв'ю з українцями й спонсорами, котрі приймали українців, мали на меті аналіз проблем, із якими зіткнулись обидві групи, задіяні в HFUS, а також з'ясування особливостей адаптації українців до нових умов, ідентифікації їх у новому середовищі, нових контактів та планів на майбутнє. Найбільшими викликами для українців стали погане знання англійської мови й працевлаштування за фахом, медичне обслуговування, складнощі в роботі із системою навігації подання електронних заявок, неможливість будувати плани через нестійке становище. Шотландці, зі свого боку, указали на брак прозорості та зрозумілості HFUS, контактів із місцевими радами, знань про наслідки користування схемою. Аналіз інтерв'ю й інших відкритих джерел виявив деякі особливості, які, на нашу думку, заслуговують на увагу для врахування в політиці інтеграції мігрантів у Шотландії, зокрема ефективності схеми HFUS та роботі державних і волонтерських організацій, що опікуються українськими та іншими вимушеними мігрантами. Отримані дані можуть бути також ураховані й упроваджені в політику повернення українських громадян на батьківщину після завершення війни.

Ключові слова: російсько-українська війна, вимушені мігранти, тимчасовий захист, проживання, працевлаштування, нестійке становище.

INTRODUCTION

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia in February 2022 caused a massive influx of forced migrants from Ukraine to the EU and other countries, which opened their borders and granted Ukrainians temporary protection, which includes the right to work, study, shelter, financial support and medical assistance (European Commission, 2022). Upon arrival, Ukrainians were usually accommodated in localised places, such as hotels; local housing providers and hotel owners in certain European countries provided accommodations (Haase et al., 2023). Special arrival centres for Ukrainians were established in some European cities, which provided the concentrated work of various services and support organisations. (Haase et al., 2023, pp. 3–4).

The UK government chose to maintain their visa requirements for Ukrainians, applying a peculiar approach compared to their previous refugee policy and different from EU countries. They implemented two schemes that allow Ukrainian refugees to enter and reside in the UK for three years (GOV.UK, 2022a). Later, an additional scheme was added, which permitted a change in visa type.

The first scheme launched was the Ukraine Family Scheme (UFS) (March 1, 2022), allowing Ukrainians to enter the UK and join their family members who are UK residents. Ukrainians received the right to access the labour market and healthcare services, educational opportunities, as well as access the benefits and other support.

The second scheme, the Homes for Ukraine Scheme (HFUS), also known as the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme, was launched on March 18, 2022. This program offers Ukrainians the chance to flee to the UK with the backing of a sponsor which could be a UK resident, community group, local authority, or business (Walsh, 2022, p. 5). The sponsor provides housing for the first six months, with the option to extend this period. According to Member of Parliament Michael Gove, this scheme was originally launched for people who already knew each other (Turner, 2022). However, it expanded rather quickly and attracted British residents who did not have any connections with Ukrainians, as well as charities, community groups and churches offering help in settling Ukrainians. In addition, the Scottish and Welsh governments have organised an additional "super-sponsorship" program under HFUS, wherein the government acts as a sponsor and arranges temporary accommodations for incoming refugees in hotels or rented cruise ships. The "super-sponsorship" program has been discontinued. Instead, in February 2024, the UK government decided to extend existing HFUS visas for another 18 months from their expiry date. Arriving in the UK via HFUS, Ukrainians receive the same rights and opportunities as under UFS.

Thus, 207,900 Ukrainians arrived in the UK under the HFUS, as of 10th May 2023 (GOV.UK, 2022a). At the moment, 27,157 Ukrainians who fled the war are currently residing in Scotland. Of these, 21,067 are sponsored by the Scottish Government, while 6,114 live with sponsors in the same housing. This is an intriguing practice of refugee policy, since by living with locals, refugees adapt to the host society and learn the language faster, while sponsors have the opportunity to gain insights into new cultures and meet new people. By encouraging sponsorship, the Government also addresses the issue of the lack of social housing for refugees.

Our interviews with Ukrainians and sponsors who hosted Ukrainians **aimed to** analyse the challenges faced by both groups involved in HFUS.

1. A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE REGARDING UKRAINIAN FORCED MIGRANTS AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OTHER SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMS FOR REFUGEES

Research by Ukraine Advice Scotland provides insight into the short-term results of visa schemes for displaced Ukrainians in the UK (Blair, & Lynch, 2022). 143 survey responses were collected in August 2022 from mainly Ukrainians, sponsors, and supporters. In general, respondents expressed gratitude for the opportunity to be safe, and satisfaction with the schemes, as they provide access to the labour market, medical services and education. Among the problems, the report highlighted the difficulties in bureaucratic processes (such as obtaining a visa, medical care, access to education for children), and poor communication with local authorities regarding the resolution of problems related to sponsorship and housing issues. Other significant issues were general uncertainty about the "future" of the scheme and housing concerns. Cassidy (2023) has reported that due to the differences in the timeframes for residence permits for Ukrainians in the UK and the sponsors' obligation to provide housing, along with the cost-of-living crisis, sponsors could not afford to offer housing to Ukrainians, leaving many of them homeless. Ukrainians seeking housing independently were unable to meet the legal requirements of landlords. Therefore, the UK's policy of deterring potential migrants has combined with structural issues in the housing sector, potentially leading to a large number of refugees without homes. The existence of these issues has been also verified by additional studies, notably Meade et al. (2023).

Novak (2022) examines the problem of social vulnerability of Ukrainian internally displaced persons (IDPs) and forced migrants, most of whom are women with children, pensioners, disabled people and orphans. She argues that the vulnerability of these populations is multifactorial. She applies the concept of social exclusion at two levels: distributive (insufficient access to basic social goods and material deprivation, that is, lack of resources to maintain the necessary consumption) and relational (limited social participation and lack of normative integration). Due to the destruction of socio-economic ties, IDPs and forced migrants have higher risks of social exclusion from economic and political life, from the spheres of education and culture, social protection and the social environment. Although two-thirds of forced migrants who used to work before have higher education, when escaping from territories where hostilities were fought, the majority of them lose their jobs, property and housing, as well as social capital, status and connections. This loss leads to the phenomenon of sudden poverty (Novak, 2022, p. 30). The author highlighted the problems with housing and employment as the most pressing for Ukrainian forced migrants abroad, especially for women with children under 18 years old. We can assume that the settlement of Ukrainian forced migrants in the same housing with residents reduces the risk of social exclusion due to the faster adaptation of Ukrainians to society. In addition, sponsors can provide support for employment or childcare, and have a positive impact on the acquisition of new social connections for newcomers. On the other hand, it requires physical, emotional and financial efforts of sponsors, which demands increased attention and support provision from local authorities.

The study of van Dijk et al. (2022) examines how the residence of refugees together with locals affects the adaptation of the former in various aspects. The study was conducted in 2017 in the Netherlands using an online survey (104 questionnaires) of refugees and hosts who were settled together by NGO TakeCareBnB. The authors argue that the established “social bridges” between refugees and their sponsors significantly influence the integration of refugees into the host society and that the actions of hosts affect different aspects of the refugees' lives through the support provided to them and the network of social contacts. For instance, sponsors encouraged them to volunteer or find a job. Living with sponsors, rather than in localised refugee camps (which are usually located far from cities), has a significant impact on the access to education for refugees. Living with sponsors helped refugees learn the language, as well as helped them feel safe and “at home” (van Dijk et al., 2022, p. 330). It also allowed sponsors to learn more about new cultures and make new friends. Therefore, negative impacts on the lives of sponsors, such as lack of privacy, restriction of personal comfort, as well as possible misunderstandings with guests, need to be minimised by local authorities.

Derwing and Mulder (2003) focus on the experiences of sponsors from Northern Alberta, Canada, who hosted refugees who fled Kosovo as a result of the civil war between the Serbs and ethnic Albanians in

1998. The peculiarity of this case is that similar to the response to Ukrainian forced migrants, Canadian society had a more positive attitude towards refugees from Kosovo. Residents in Canada were willing to open their homes to shelter Kosovo refugees, mirroring the current situation with Ukrainian forced migrants in the UK. Both the situation and the work of the scheme for accepting refugees from Kosovo were very similar to the Ukrainian case now in the UK. As part of the sponsorship experience study, 33 focus groups were conducted with 94 sponsors of Kosovars, as well as 86 of these sponsors completed a questionnaire. Firstly, the sponsors expected the Kosovars to be very similar to them in behaviour and daily life, but their expectations turned out to be the opposite. Many sponsors were also mistaken about the level of religiosity and the psychological trauma of the Kosovars. Secondly, often the expectations of refugees for support from sponsors did not correspond to the capabilities of the latter. In addition, sponsors expressed dissatisfaction with poor communication with government agencies and insufficient information support.

In the research of Feniks (2023), the emphasis is on the mental health of Ukrainian forced migrants. Over 30 % of respondents presented severe distress, with 9 % at the top of the scale requiring medical intervention at the time of the survey. The following 25 % were in moderate distress, over 55 % in the clinically significant range of psychological distress and at risk of depression. Undoubtedly, this issue deserves a separate discussion with experts.

2. METHODOLOGY

In our research, we opted for a qualitative approach in order to 1) capture a wide range of challenges and 2) delve deeply into the experiences and difficulties encountered by the participants.

This article is based on a series of in-depth interviews from two of our projects: 1) 20 semi-structured face-to-face interviews with Ukrainian forced migrants in Scotland, conducted from October 2022 to March 2023, aimed at identifying the issues and challenges they encountered in Scotland; 2) 6 interviews with Ukrainian forced migrants and 4 interviews with sponsors as part of the Master's dissertation project titled "The experience of relationships of Ukrainian refugees and their sponsors living together in Edinburgh under the ‘guest’ and ‘host’ discourses". Data collection took place in June-July 2023; 8 interviews were conducted face-to-face, while 2 were conducted online via Microsoft Teams.

Both interview series included questions concerning HFUS, encompassing discussions of its benefits and drawbacks, as well as suggestions for potential changes to the scheme.

Interviews with Ukrainian forced migrants were conducted in Ukrainian or Russian, at the respondents' choice (since some of them lived in more Russian-speaking regions of Ukraine). Interviews with sponsors were conducted in English. Interviews, both with Ukrainians and with sponsors, lasted 50–80 minutes. Audio recordings were used, and then transcribed into text and deleted.

The recruiting of Ukrainian forced migrants for both projects took place during events organised by the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain (AUGB) in Edinburgh, which since the beginning of the war in Ukraine has been providing information and support to Ukrainians who have arrived in Edinburgh, as well as regularly holding cultural events (AUGB, n.d.). Another source of participants was the free English classes provided by an independent charity, The Welcoming Association, which supports refugees and migrants in Edinburgh. Additionally, the snowball method was used.

When recruiting Ukrainian respondents, an attempt was made to cover different categories of Ukrainian forced migrants coming to the UK, which served as a kind of selection criteria. Firstly, most Ukrainian refugees are women and children (GOV.UK, 2022b). Although, in general, military-age men cannot leave Ukraine during wartime, this is possible under certain circumstances (disability, a large family, etc.). Secondly, Ukrainian refugees can come in families or alone. Therefore, during recruiting, we tried to reach different groups of Ukrainian forced migrants (of different ages and genders, who came to Edinburgh on their own or with partners/families). Interviews were conducted with the following ***Ukrainian participants*** (in total for two projects):

Men – 7 people.

Women – 19 people.

Regions (Oblasts): Chernihiv, Sumy, Kharkiv, Dnipro, Donetsk, Kyiv, Kirovohrad, Zaporizhia, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Ternopil, Lviv.

Age: 18 (2), 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, 31, 32, 36, 37, 38 (2), 39, 42, 45, 47, 50, 52, 57, 60, 65, 66 (2), 70 (2).

It was challenging to determine the essential traits of sponsors for Ukrainian forced migrants. Additionally, the process of recruiting sponsors was complicated, and there were no specific criteria for selecting this group. As a result, ***the sponsoring participants*** possessed the following characteristics:

1. Woman, 65 years old, Ukrainians lived with her for 4,5 months;
2. Woman, 61 years old, Ukrainian woman has been living with her for more than a year;
3. Man, 47 years old, a Ukrainian woman lived with him for a year;
4. Woman, 65 years old, Ukrainians lived with them for 5,5 months.

Before scheduling the interview with the respondents, they were informed about the topic and details of the study, guaranteed the confidentiality of the information they provided, and their agreement to use an audio recording for the interview was obtained. We also obtained verbal consent from the respondents before conducting the interviews, for using their names/pseudonyms in the text and quoting them. We avoided discussing the sensitive and painful topic of relocation with Ukrainian respondents.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Firstly, it is worth noting the profound gratitude expressed by all Ukrainian participants towards the Scottish people for generously welcoming them into their homes, and to the Scottish government for providing shelter.

The most common ***factor in choosing the UK or Scotland*** was language, as most respondents had at least a basic knowledge of English.

"I didn't really want to go to an English-speaking country, but I agreed with my mother that there would be a job, and it's easier to learn English, because we learn it throughout our lives, and in the environment, it will be easier to talk to people, because you already understand it at least a little, because you already have the basics. And I agreed."

Other important factors included the chance to secure employment and access to educational opportunities. *"I made sure children will be able to study at universities for free, in Scotland or Ireland. The issue here is that they not only would have security, but education."* Interestingly, no one said that they focused on the level of social assistance or the general standard of living in the country.

3.1. Problems, Faced by Ukrainian Forced Migrants

The majority of Ukrainian respondents identified issues related to the ***organisation of medical care*** as their primary concern. Most of those who faced health problems highlighted the slow pace of medical service, including urgent medical care, such as in the case of injuries. "*It takes a long time, and the results take a long time." "There is a problem when you need to call an ambulance. Here, for about forty minutes, you need to answer questions that seem appropriate to them, but not at the time when the person feels bad. It takes a very long time to endure, for example, some pain, forty minutes is a lot. And then they say they will call back, because they will arrange an appointment somewhere in another city, and you have to get there and then find where to go and wait again".*

Ukrainians encountered variations in treatment protocols and a lack of clear understanding regarding the distribution of treatment responsibilities among different physicians, even within the same medical speciality. However, they expressed satisfaction over the ability to obtain medications and medical devices free of charge: "*I would like them to improve the quality of reception, more respect in communication, and to have only one GP doctor you deal with, so that you know their name and have the opportunity to say hello, then communication would be livelier. I note the positive side – when they found out what medicines I needed, I received them for free. In addition, I was recommended and given a measurement device, a glucometer. In our country, I couldn't afford it, but here I got it for free".*

Many Ukrainians faced challenges due to their lack of ***English language knowledge***.

Several participants who had previous experience with English in other countries, and were confident in their proficiency, reported encountering differences and realising gaps in their knowledge too: *"When we lived in the States, I did not work, and my communication was only in English 24/7. So, I expected it to be very easy for me, but when I came here, I realised that I didn't know English. They speak differently. And I found myself in an environment where there is business, but I am at the household level".*

In this regard, the issue of the availability of free language courses, especially for children and teenagers, is still relevant for many.

It's important to note that the speed and success of finding ***employment*** are closely tied to one's level of English proficiency. Some individuals were able to secure a job similar to their previous work experience in Ukraine within 2–3 weeks. Challenges related to professional qualifications are most common among lawyers and doctors, who often need additional training and certification to work in their field. However, doctors often take on low-skilled jobs related to healthcare, such as caring for the elderly and people with disabilities. Those with strong English skills also found employment in administrative positions.

If English proficiency was not sufficient, the most accessible employment options were positions such as roomkeeper/housekeeper, or other low-paid physical work. Thus, insufficient language proficiency or difficulty finding a job in one's field has led to low-skilled employability. Even for those with a high level of language proficiency, employment in their (or related) field has still resulted in a decrease in social status within the professional realm. According to Jirka, Kamionka, and Macková (2023), a similar situation was observed in Poland and the Czech Republic.

Since children as young as 13 are permitted to work in the UK, over time, teenagers also started to seek temporary holiday employment and some even landed permanent part-time jobs.

A notable number of Ukrainian forced migrants immediately began to look for employment opportunities. In general, Ukrainians manifest themselves as active economic entities[1]: *" I do not believe that the state is fully obliged to support me here. That's why I went to work. I didn't sit or wait".*

Some respondents shared their creative ideas for starting a new business, and some even contributed to developing their sponsors' businesses: *"The entrepreneurial spirit that Ukrainians have, it is not here. […] I look at my sponsors' production – they don't do anything. It's just a website. A few times a year there are either fairs or whatever it's called when a lot of people hang out in the streets. They participated once, made twenty thousand pounds that evening. I asked, "Why only once?"".*

Ukrainians found the challenge of combining work and childcare to be unexpectedly difficult:

"One of our main problems was to enrol children in school. Another problem is that children under the age of 12 should not be left alone at home. And it was harder to make it so we didn't leave them alone because my mother and I should have worked together, but we couldn't work like that. We had to take shifts - either I came to work, or she went to work, and the other sat with the children. Then it got easier when they started school and we started working".

Attendance at ***schools*** in the UK is mandatory for all children aged 5 and above, and online education from a Ukrainian school cannot be recognized.

How do Ukrainian children adapt to Scottish schools? "*My sister shares that it is difficult for her to be in an English-speaking environment because she feels like a black sheep. She doesn't speak English. She understands what people are saying, but she can't start making friends with children she can't relate to. It was difficult for her to manage this. She's 13 years old, and it's been stressful for her".*

The school curriculum in the UK differs significantly from that in Ukrainian schools; many consider it to be easier and more child-friendly: *"Here in schools, the program is easier for the child's age than in Ukraine, and she [daughter] is simply not interested in some lessons, because she knows it. And she sits, and she understands it, but they teach it differently".* In the UK, Ukrainians perceive mathematics and natural sciences as weaker. Some students also take online lessons with Ukrainian teachers to align with the Ukrainian school curriculum. However, schools in the UK have new subjects that children enjoy, such as Drama, Home Economics, and others. Parents are typically happy with the schools and the attentive approach to children and their specific needs, including extra support for children with chronic illnesses or disabilities. However, some parents have expressed surprise and dissatisfaction with the way sexual education topics are addressed, feeling that too much emphasis is placed on LGBT families. *"I told the teacher that we are a traditional religious family, and I would like the children to be taught the rules of interaction between a man and a woman in a family. The teacher replied that I could transfer my children to a private school".*

[1] Without employment, they can receive social benefits in an amount that allows them to meet their basic needs for food and clothing (of course, excluding the cost of housing, which is provided free of charge under the HFUS scheme; sponsors receive a grant from the state as a sign of gratitude, which covers utility costs for the maintenance of their guests).

It is important to emphasize ***the human-centred approach***, characterized by considerable attention to individual needs such as food and medical care, which was perceived by Ukrainians in various settings, including the workplace, irrespective of their occupation, position, or income.

One respondent even reported feeling an increase in self-esteem after arriving in Scotland: *"When I came here, I noticed for the first time in my life how much I had become self-respecting. I had not reached this level before."* Several individuals responded to the question, *"Who do you feel yourself to be here?"* by saying, *"I feel a human here"*. A woman shared that, compared to Ukraine, she received better treatment at her workplace in Scotland, for instance, she had the flexibility to take time off when necessary and was consistently met with understanding. *"The effect that Scotland had on me is extraordinary – for the first time, I felt that I could just be a person, just a woman, and look the way I wanted. Here I feel that I have no requirements for existence. I just live, look the way I want, do what I want, eat what I want. No one is judging me here. I'm used to the fact that in Ukraine you are evaluated wherever you go. And very strict conditions of communication are so unconscious, but there is no such thing here. And I feel like I'm just a free person – that's my status"*.

Ukrainian participants have also assessed the condition of humanitarian support in Scotland: *"The fact that schools give children free meals, and help with clothes for the poor, this is also wonderful. Unfortunately, we do not have this now [in Ukraine], and if we do, it is such a meagre amount of money that it is not enough. Here, for this amount, you can dress a child, and the child can eat. That is, the state supports citizens, and I like it"*.

Many comments pointed toward the need for more organised support from statutory services, especially regarding better ***communication between Ukrainians and authorities.***

Ukrainian newcomers actively engage with fellow compatriots to establish ***new social connections***. Even if the Ukrainian participants rate their English proficiency highly, they acknowledge that most of their interactions are with other Ukrainians*: "I have the most contacts here in Scotland with people like me who moved from Ukraine. I keep in touch, and I still have communication with my work colleagues, but this is only at work. And then I spend all my free time with people I met here, who used to live in Ukraine. I am very glad that there is such a Ukrainian centre* [AUGB (Oliinyk, & Oliinyk, 2023)]*, thanks to which we were able to get to know each other, and at least build some communication ties with each other and contacts. That is, we can see each other at least once, once every two weeks. And thus it makes our stay here easier"*.

Naturally, Ukrainians keep in touch with their relatives, friends, and colleagues who stayed in Ukraine or left for other countries.[1] However, contacts with the locals are often limited to sponsors, neighbours, and work colleagues.

Relations with sponsors are determined, first of all, by respect for their boundaries: *"We adhere to some boundaries. Yes, it can sometimes be stressful, because at home you would do what you want. And here you are a little constrained in your actions, but this is normal, this is just respectful. Attitude towards other people who help you out. […] We don't violate each other's boundaries. That is, their rhythm has not changed a lot anyway, we try not to overload them. Sometimes they don't notice our presence. I am constantly at work, the child is at school. Yes, we spend some time together, sometimes we can talk, have a tea party, have dinner somewhere. And this makes them happy since we brighten up their leisure time. But, in general, we try not to disturb or burden them so that they can live exactly as they lived. And by doing so, we do not spoil relations"*. It's important to note that the sponsors perceived this cautious behaviour as Ukrainians isolating themselves and being unwilling to leave their homes or reach out to the sponsors.

Cultural differences were evident as the Scots saw the Ukrainians as straightforward, while the Ukrainians struggled to understand the Scots' polite but indirect communication.

The HFUS was established partly due to the high cost of ***housing*** in Scotland. There is a shortage of social housing provided by the Scottish Government for Ukrainians. Additionally, renting accommodation poses a challenge in big cities such as Edinburgh or Glasgow. While Ukrainians appreciate the extended sponsorship scheme beyond the initial 6 months and are deeply grateful to the Scottish people who welcomed them, they still ***strive for separation***: *"My friends settled me, I can live [there] as long as I need. Here is another question – that after some time it will become uncomfortable for me, as an adult, full-*

[1] You can read more about the use of technology in families lived apart in Oliinyk and Oliinyk (2024).

fledged person, to live like this all the time". "The conditions on the ship help us because we don't pay for housing, we have food provision, but a lot is decided for you. I don't like it. The feeling when you are a refugee is unpleasant and uncomfortable for an independent adult". For comparison, Konstanz, Germany is also facing a challenging situation in its residential real estate market. The demand for housing far exceeds the supply. As a result, approximately one-fifth of Ukrainian refugees (21,5 %) have experienced resettling in refugee camps (Sydorov, & Kovalska, 2022). Edinburgh is encountering a similar issue due to its status as the capital of Scotland, the constant influx of migrants and tourists, the presence of prestigious universities, and the labour market offering a substantial number of jobs. However, the implementation of the HFUS scheme has successfully mitigated these challenges, particularly in averting primary resettlement in refugee camps.

The majority of respondents report that they lack ***vision for the future***, making it impossible to plan for more than a few months. Everyone dreams of Ukraine's victory and returning home: *"I hope for our victory. For the fact that I am returning to my beautiful city. The fact that we are succeeding. That we are rebuilding, we are developing, we are improving. [...] And I hope that people who left will come back and apply all their new knowledge. And we will have changes. And we will be the best country in Europe".*

Some are making plans to give their children a European education: *"But I don't mean to go back as soon as possible. I want to give my child an education. And as long as it takes, that's how much I will stay for her sake. But then I'll be back".*

Naturally, some individuals intend to remain in Scotland and begin anew. Mainly, these are Ukrainians whose residences are situated in the occupied areas, where they are unwilling to return until these areas are liberated, demined, and infrastructure is restored: *"Not to Ukraine at all, even if to another city. In Kyiv, Lviv, housing is very expensive [...] and the salary there is decreasing and decreasing. And from my point of view, it's unreal".*

3.2. Problems Faced by Sponsors Who Hosted Ukrainians in Their Own Homes

Hosting Motivations. The primary reason for sponsors opening their doors to Ukrainian forced migrants was due to the shock of Russia's sudden aggression against Ukraine, and their desire to help those fleeing the war. Sponsors were also motivated by their personal or family histories associated with forced displacement due to military aggression, as well as cultural and national ties: *"The other reason is that my mother and my father were children in Hitler's war. […] And my mum and my dad although they didn't know each other then, were sent away, as evacuation, to the English countryside. So, strangers took them in and looked after them for maybe 2 years and I never forgot that. I thought somebody was kind enough to look after my mum and dad and if they hadn't, I would not be here maybe. So that was my reason to help".*

Another participant also shared her experience of being evacuated from Prague as a child during the Russian invasion of 1968. The third participant is a Pole living in the UK for a long time, expressing great empathy for the Ukrainians.

One hosting participant had previously hosted several refugees through Refugees At Home (2022) since 2016, so living with a Ukrainian forced migrant was not a new experience for her. Her engagement with this organisation began from her desire to help refugees in need: *"Politically and socially, I believe that we all need to help each other. Everybody's human so my motivation is that I have a home and some people don't, and we all have a shared responsibility. And also it's a benefit to all of us because we meet lovely people".*

The ***matching process*** for Ukrainian migrants and their potential sponsors occurred through various channels, including councils, volunteer organisations such as Refugees At Home, and Facebook pages where Ukrainians could find sponsors. Some sponsors who applied through the UK government website were frustrated with the slow response time, as they anticipated a quicker matching process to get Ukrainians out of danger. One host, for instance, registered online as soon as the opportunity to become a sponsor was announced but received no response from the government after three weeks. Consequently, she turned to Facebook pages and found her guests herself.

Interestingly, some hosts and guests shared similar professions and interests, which played a role in the matching process. This led to closer relationships between hosts and their Ukrainian guests and allowed hosts to better assist their guests in adjusting to the new environment. For example, one of the hosts, a general practitioner, knew that his guest had a medical degree before her arrival. He consulted with his nursing colleagues and even reached out to the nursing college to find opportunities for her. As someone who had emigrated from Poland, he was also able to explain the cultural differences between Scotland and Eastern Europe.

Sponsors expressed that they had sufficient financial and informational assistance. However, they believed it was crucial to have someone who could assist them in solving specific 'hosting' or emotional issues if they arose. Also, ***difficulties in contacting the council*** and slow resolutions to ***problems with payments*** were mentioned.

The hosts noted that the sponsorship was a positive experience for them, as it allowed them to make new friends, learn about a new culture, feel good for providing help, and learn something new about themselves. For example, one sponsor noted that he became more patient, his lifestyle became more active, and he improved his mental health. Another sponsor discovered a new hobby, which her Ukrainian guests introduced her to: she enjoys weaving camouflage nets with other volunteers, which then are sent to the Ukrainian defenders on the frontline.

When hosts invite guests into their homes, they often face the challenge of a ***lack of personal space***. This issue was highlighted by participants as the main disadvantage of sponsorship. However, in this context, the term "space" no longer just refers to physical or geographical boundaries, but also includes spatial and temporary boundaries necessary for a comfortable feeling of being at home, and for fulfilling one's physical and emotional needs. As a result, sponsors may no longer feel the same level of comfort in their own space and may need to change their behaviour, which can prevent them from being their "true selves" and engaging in activities they enjoy, such as dancing or playing music. The relationship between the host and guest is determined by how they solve this issue of space.

Hosts prefer guests to have an active social life and not spend too much time at home. This allows them to feel more comfortable and have more time alone or with their families. One host found a solution to this issue by separating the space in her house. The guest had her bathroom which was located on the basement floor, while the kitchen and living room on the ground floor were shared, and the host's family bedrooms were on the first floor. She also mentioned that having a guest in the house even helped her family. Her daughter, who has autism, started to control herself more due to the presence of the guest in the house.

The hosts note that they feel an ***emotional attachment*** to their guests and in most cases continue to maintain a warm relationship. Three out of four defined their experience of hosting Ukrainians in their homes as positive and said, *"We are almost a family"*. The host, who defined her experience as negative, called it so precisely because she became attached to the guests, and they left without saying goodbye. She was not prepared for such consequences.

CONCLUSION

This article delves into perspectives on the impact of the HFUS implementation in Scotland. Based in-depth interviews with Ukrainian forced migrants and the sponsors who have welcomed them into their homes in Edinburgh, the study revealed the challenges faced by both groups involved in the scheme: 1) the slow progress of the healthcare sector from the viewpoint of Ukrainians, 2) language barriers and the associated difficulties in finding employment, 3) challenges in children's adaptation in schools and parents balancing work with childcare, 4) communication difficulties with local councils, and 5) cultural differences between Scots and Ukrainians.

The sponsors' decision to open their homes to Ukrainians was often impulsive and emotional, driven by personal or family stories of forced displacement due to military aggression, as well as deep cultural and national connections. This emotional investment made it challenging for the sponsors to have specific expectations. They were uncertain about the identities and mental states of the individuals they would host. Despite this uncertainty, their primary aim was to ensure their guests' comfort. The emotional impact of sponsorship was significant – it provided the sponsors with a positive experience, allowing them to forge new friendships, immerse themselves in a new culture, experience the joy of helping others, and gain fresh insights into their own identities. Sponsors experienced the challenge of limited personal space. The issue of accommodation presented uncertainty for both sides.

Finally, we would like to emphasize that Ukrainians are increasingly integrating into the new society and considering educational opportunities for their children in Scotland. This trend suggests that the longer the war persists, the fewer people will return to Ukraine. Given this, we urge policymakers facilitating the return of Ukrainians to consider the positive aspects of life in both Scotland and Ukraine, as identified by Ukrainian forced migrants, and work towards fostering similar conditions in Ukraine.

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