

Disbelief in government scheme slows charity work to a crawl

London-based charity 'Refugees at Home' is refusing to process new requests made by Ukrainian refugees through the government's Homes for Ukraine scheme. While continuing to work on the initial requests for placements made through their own organisation, the charity will turn down new requests for rematches made through the government scheme.

According to The Guardian, Refugees at Home has lost faith in the government scheme and believes that it is 'too bureaucratic' and 'has no mechanism for one local authority to talk to another'; which complicates the prospects of a rematching process as the minimum hosting period draws to a close.

The British government services website (gov.uk), lists the charity as one of five 'recognised providers', through which Ukrainian refugees can be matched and rematched with UK hosts for a minimum period of six months. However, online news platform 'PoliticsHome' reports that many host families are now struggling to afford the increase to household bills and cannot host the refugees anymore, despite receiving £350 as monthly payments from the government as aid.

This could push a large number of Ukrainians out onto Britain's streets, with council figures already reporting 1,565 Ukrainian households as homeless from 24 February until 26 August 2022. Approximately 94,900 Ukrainians have come to the UK to stay with British families since the war began. The organisations listed as recognised providers could now be expecting an influx of applications for rematches.

The charity's phone lines only operate for a few hours a day and play an automated message which asks applicants or inquirers to contact them via email instead. "We certainly are very busy at the moment," says Rob, who works at the Refugees at Home phone desk. "We try to get back as soon as possible, but we currently have a small team working through all of this."