**Information for School Leaders on the Ukrainian Response**

**31.3.22**

**1. Context:**

* The humanitarian crisis in Ukraine is resulting in families leaving the country and seeking asylum in other countries. In the UK, citizens are being asked to accommodate Ukrainian families in their homes. Ukrainian families will vary in size, dependant on their individual circumstances. They will all be fleeing appalling atrocities and will need the compassion and support from a wide range of sources.
* The vast majority of these families will all have children, and if they want their children to attend school, they will be need to apply for a school placement in the same way UK citizens do, through the School Admissions service at their local Council. Families will be supported with this.

**2. Previous Learning:**

* Warwickshire recently successfully placed a number of children as part of the Afghan re-settlement scheme. A central cell or group was established for dealing with school placements and support for the families. The group continues to meet weekly and there is a central communication mechanism where all involved can access information to do with the children and young people.
* A Tracker was established with basic information about the children and young people and where their school placement was arranged. This was a live document that could be added to and updated.
* Ethnic Minority Traveller Advisory Service, Family Information Service, Admissions, Free School Meals and Transport were all involved in the cell meetings and worked collaboratively to ensure school placements and associated provision were sought.
* The process was accelerated by officers in the cell having strong, positive relationships with school leaders. This enabled the normal in-year school place application process to be completed quicker by dealing with Head-Teachers directly. Many were only too pleased to assist.
* The cell worked closely with admissions to ensure places were available in the schools required.
* It is proposed this previous learning is applied to the Ukraine response. The established cell will continue and now focus on Ukraine families.
* Wider support for families was also established. Early Years were instrumental in setting up stay and play sessions for example.

**3. Current Situation:**

* It is unclear at this stage how many families will be coming to the UK. Education will attend the WCC response cell to ensure we receive the most accurate information on number of families to support planning. Information will be recorded on our tracker and progress and status can be updated.
* A section on the WCC website is being created in Ukrainian on how to apply for a school place. Admissions staff will be available to support the application. There will be a google translate function on the admissions homepage.
* We are mindful that due to their lived experiences, some families may not want to be separated from their children straight away.
* Host families will support Ukrainian families to apply for schools through admissions. Admissions will be aware of which schools currently have waiting lists and available places. If a place is not available in a preferred school, admissions will offer the next nearest available place.
* Whilst there is a steady stream of families entering the UK and Warwickshire, the current admissions process is able to support these applications as part of business-as-usual activities. If numbers increase significantly a contingency needs to be in place. It is crucial that **Education Services receives up to date information on any new families when it is available** so that plans can scale up if needed.
* The Department for Education have been clear they expect the existing School Admission Code to be adhered to and applied to all children, meaning current admissions policies and processes to be followed in placing any refugee children.
* We understand it will likely be the preference for any refugee children to attend the same school as children of host families. As with all school admissions we will accommodate parental preference where possible. However, where schools are already full and cannot offer extra places or have other children on existing waiting lists admissions legislation will apply, and parents will be advised of the other schools in the area with available space and the home to school transport options available.

**4. Contingency**

* Should numbers increase significantly a cross team and department approach will review the current procedure and update the current response to deal with demand.