



Ukraine Together

Co-production insights



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The Big Red Kick



This report draws on the experience of Ukrainians who are part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme, as well as community groups who have experience of providing long-term support to displaced communities, both within the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

We worked together, over a three-week period, to explore the challenges of displaced communities and co-produced the Ukraine Together Fund, a community chest of grants for delivery in 2024/25.

Since February 2022 almost 2000 Ukrainians have arrived in Greenwich as part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Throughout the three-week period of study, we examined the commonality of their experience and the local services and activities that would help support them.

This report would be of interest to:

- Local and national organisations that fund, design and deliver services for the Homes for Ukraine scheme.
- Organisations and community groups delivering activities for forcibly displaced people in the UK.
- Statutory agencies, funders and public bodies who are operating in the Royal Borough of Greenwich and delivering services to Ukrainian forcibly displaced people.

Recommendations

Our small Ukraine Together grant funding of £16,000 over one year should focus on seed funding five main areas:

- Sharing food
- Finding appropriate employment
- Communicating existing services
- Community events
- Making friends

We will extend this work, which is inherently limited by the size of the funding pot, by advocating to other relevant organisations and individuals, so that we may join together to help meet the needs of forcibly displaced people in Greenwich.

Why this report is needed

- Co-produce sustainable longer-term services to the Ukrainian community in Greenwich.
- Co-design a community chest small grants programme, based on the needs of the Ukrainian community.
- Co-develop activities with existing displaced community groups.



The rapidity of formation of the UK government's Homes for Ukraine scheme, in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, and the sheer volume of arrivals that it led to prompted criticism in the media for appearing to create a more favourable environment for Ukrainian displaced people¹ within the UK.

In the Royal Borough of Greenwich, the local authority supported the creation of a bespoke, Ukrainian-led, bilingual casework support service for new arrivals: Ukrainian Support Greenwich (USG). As a local service, developed from an existing Ukrainian playgroup in an established charity, The Big Red Bus Club, USG benefitted from the charity's existing deep roots in Greenwich and the national profile of the playgroup in the existing Ukrainian community.



However, although USG was well supported and well financed, by 2024 continued financial support from the government was uncertain. Moreover, it was clear that there were well-established local services for displaced communities that the Ukrainian community could learn from, to create a sustainable, community-led model of support.

Participants

We would like to thank New Arrival Support CIC (NASCIC) for inviting and supporting members of the Ukrainian community to participate in the workshops. This included undertaking co-production training in advance, acting as interpreters, facilitators and helping to organise the events.

In addition to the (NASCIC) team we would like to extend our appreciation to the users from the Big Red Bus Club for their active participation in this project.



A huge thanks also to the staff and volunteers of Javan Coker, Ukrainian Arts Hub, English for Action, Nigerian Community Greenwich, Plateful Café and Royal Borough of Greenwich Public Health for their contributions. Together we were;

Svitlana Bila, Shlapak Marianna, Serhii Yehorov, Myroslav Melnyk, Mykyta Radishevsky, Mykola Dmytruk, Mykhailo Tupytsia, Liudmyla Adamenko, Kateryna Borisovsk, Inna Soldatenko, Zoriana Yanushevsk, Svitlana Biloshyts, Valentyna Gunchak, Khrystyna Mytnyk, Oksana Stepanchuk, Fatou Colley, Ester Sesay, Lara Aina, Micah Oladipo, Amina Issah, Lucie Vyhualkova, Hugh Irvine, Lucie Isaiah, Uliana Dutchuk, Antonina Maryliv, Kelly-Ann Ibrahim, Oksana Kalala, Olena Podolska, Yuliia Mazuryk, Olha Radishevsk, Julia Botan, Anna Kanivets, Veronika Shliakhova, Nichola Hardy and Janinia Clare Welburn

Summary of methodology

This report draws predominantly on the lived experience of Ukrainians who are currently part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme, and the organisational knowledge of local community organisations in the Royal Borough of Greenwich.



“I enjoyed the Ice-breaker game. It helped me to realise that I am not one in the world, and I felt the warmth of other people.”

Anonymous Ukrainian Participant



Putting users at the heart of systemic change

The Big Red Kick co-production model is based on a three-step process:

- Share the evidence to create user personas.
- Develop user stories.
- Create a story map to explore needs, services and improvements.

Step One – User Persona

A user persona is a common marketing and project development tool. Personas are developed using demographic information, collected from users and quantitative data. User personas in a business forum are used to describe goals, desires and the limitations of a client segment.

Step Two – User Stories

A user story has its origins in computer software design. For example: “As [a user persona], I want [to perform this action] so that [I can accomplish this goal].”

Step Three – Story Mapping

A user story map is a method for arranging user stories into a more holistic view of the overall user experience in any given system.

This simple three-step community co-production model comprised of two workshops, a small group research assignment on existing services and an evidence-gathering questionnaire on effective communication. Participants were supported to share their knowledge and a deep dive was taken into individual journeys through a wider web of services and activities available in Greenwich.

Workshop One - Developing User Stories

Ukrainian community in Greenwich

Oksana Kalala (NASCIC) gave a presentation about the work of Ukrainian Support Greenwich (USG) and the key issues impacting those living in Greenwich as part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

According to the 2021 census, the Royal Borough of Greenwich had the fifth largest Ukrainian population in the countryⁱⁱ. Following the Russian invasion of Crimea in 2014, The Big Red Bus Club hosted the UK ‘s only Ukrainian under-fives playgroup. This volunteer-led project had a decade of experience supporting female volunteers to deliver the group, offering Ukrainian volunteers training and advice to deliver their project. The playgroup drew Ukrainian women from across London and the Southeast.



In March 2022, the UK government launched the Homes for Ukraine scheme. The general public were asked to ‘host’ forcibly displaced Ukrainians, with the national UK government providing funding for local authorities in the form of per head payments to support services to the emergent displaced Ukrainian community, as well as payments to those hosting families in their homes.

In addition, the UK government added two less publicised elements, without additional funding for the local authority, relating to visas:

- Family visa – family members were able to join family members in the UK without any additional payments or checks.
- Temporary visas – the extension or granting of temporary visas for Ukrainians already in the UK.

No local authority data was collected for the issuing of these visas, so we have estimated the total number of Ukrainian residents and their demographic breakdown by extrapolating from the existing UK government figuresⁱⁱⁱ.

HOMES FOR UKRAINE SPONSORSHIP SCHEME: BY AGE AND SEX OF APPLICANT, GREENWICH (ESTIMATED)

Demographic breakdown	Total	%
Under 18_Male	134	14%



18 to 64_Male	163	17%
65 and over_Male	9	1%
Under 18_Female	136	14%
18 to 64_Female	483	51%
65 and over_Female	24	3%
	949	

HOMES FOR UKRAINE SPONSORSHIP SCHEME: BY AGE AND SEX OF APPLICANT, SPONSORSHIP AND FAMILY VISAS, GREENWICH (ESTIMATED)

Demographic breakdown	Total	%
Under 18_Male	267	14%
18 to 64_Male	325	17%
65 and over_Male	18	1%
Under 18_Female	272	14%
18 to 64_Female	966	51%
65 and over_Female	48	3%
	1898	

Sharing a common language

The majority of participants in workshops had English as an additional language. Together we defined key words that would have a shared and agreed definition throughout the Ukraine Together co-production process.

Beneficiaries (of the Ukraine Together Fund) – will be people who receive a gain (service, activity, benefit), and are members of the Homes for Ukraine scheme in Greenwich.

Sustainability – the Ukraine Together Fund will continue to have an impact beyond the financial life of the project. In a wider sense, the project will learn from other communities that are not as well supported as those in the Homes for Ukraine scheme.



Co-production – beneficiaries of Ukraine Together fund working together to create and deliver the project utilising our shared strategic knowledge and lived experience to create meaningful outcomes.

Co-design – include the people who will benefit in the design of the project, ensuring that beneficiaries knowledge informs all parts of the project creating the strategic project mission to practical delivery elements.

Gallery of user stories

Workshop participants created a series of user personas and their user stories, looking at differing aspects of the experience of Ukrainians living in Greenwich. Some of these were based on attendees, others were composites, which reflected the shared knowledge of lived experience in the community.



“I liked the cooperation of Ukrainians and representative of different organisations to understand the common goals.”

Anonymous Ukrainian Participant

Together we built on the user stories already created, to form a gallery of user personas and information that participants could share, discuss and add to. Participants were encouraged to consider the circumstances of each user personas and their stories and contemplate what each persona might wish for.



Workshop Two – Creating a 3D story map

The content of the second workshop was based on the feedback of participants, including the wishes the participants had given our user personas in the first session. Our ultimate aim was to have a clear set of priorities for the Ukraine Together Fund.



The wishes for our personas mostly centred around building bonds of community and friendship in the displaced Ukrainian community. A discussion took place to define the four terms we would use to describe needs and services throughout the day. There were also additional presentations and information sharing on the four key concepts.

Personal Isolation – missing a deep personal connection to share meaningful life experiences with, for example, family members or best friends.

Social Isolation – missing being around people, for example work colleagues and acquaintances in a social setting.

Friendship – a connection with another person. We went on to discuss the time and conditions required to make a friend and also the impact of forcible displacement on making and maintaining friendships. We considered the very basic amount of time it takes to make a new friend, using 11 meetings of at least three hours over six months as our starting point.

Wellbeing – a good quality of life, consisting of the elements that contributes to a long and happy existence. We looked at the Blue Zone meaning and the three main building



blocks to wellbeing: physical activity; family and community support; and a diet of local, natural produce^{iv}.



“I have seen that isolation can make young women vulnerable., They make poor decisions, get in with the wrong crowd.”

Lucy Isaiah Nigerian Community Greenwich

Wishes to Wellbeing

Participants examined the relationship between the user stories wishes from Workshop One and how they related to a wider personal and community wellbeing agenda. Looking at the three foundation building blocks of food, friendship and activity, we added learning and a sense of place to the language we used to discuss the needs of our user personas.

For example, our Nataliia user story, wished for a home (independent from sponsors) so she was able to prepare food for her children. This denoted a sense of place and independence in addition to the need to build strong personal bonds with her children through the giving and receiving of food, improving personal isolation. Wishes pertaining to finance, education and mental health support often arose as offshoots of the main three wellbeing threads; for example, the wish to learn English, in order to be able to socialise in the wider community to improve social isolation.



Services in Greenwich

Staff from Ukrainian Support Greenwich and The Big Red Bus Club joined us to help bring our user stories to life and build our 3D map of needs by physically wearing T-shirts each one depicting a user story and their wishes. They created the physical modal points of our 3D map.

Coloured thread was used to symbolise the different wellbeing elements:

- Red – friendship and community
- Brown – learning and education
- Purple – giving to yourself and others
- Blue – being active
- Green – place, home and belonging



“There are some existing services but it is often not easy to know about them (as illustrated by the string and labels activity) and there are some gaps to be filled.”

Lucie Vyhnaalkova English for Action

By linking our user stories wishes (modal points) by thread we built a picture of commonality of need. On to these interwoven points of commonality, we added the knowledge we have gathered through our ‘homework’ research activity. We added to



our map by hanging on labels to our threads which represented the services and activities which would be of benefit for the characters in our user stories. Together we examined our map of needs and existing services, walking through our 3D representation.

Participants discussed key topics and made the following recommendations:

Personal and social isolation

Improve age and culturally appropriate services. For example, creating opportunities for Ukrainians aged 55 and over to meet socially; or younger Ukrainians to forge friendships.

Improve the range and diversity of English language education opportunities; for example, English language practice for teens or older people.

Communication barrier to services

Change how services and activities are advertised. The group agreed further research on effective community communication and outreach was needed, not just for the Ukrainian community but across all thematic and geographic communities in Greenwich. For example, how do we ensure that someone who likes gardening and going on walks are aware of local opportunities, without bombarding them with activities they are not interested in?

Under employment

Improve employment opportunities; for example, ensuring local jobs and employment schemes encompassed work that matched the qualifications, skills and experience of displaced people.

Create English language and workplace culture employment and training opportunities.

Access to food

Improve independence to feed selves and family. It was noted that access to preparing nutritious food was restricted by the act of sponsorship (living in another person's home), poor quality of housing and lack of basic cooking equipment.

Improve communal food preparation space. We discussed the importance of giving, receiving and sharing food and the lack of communal facilities to prepare and share food in communities without adequate food preparation and space in the home.

Community events

Improve the number of Ukrainian community events. This included those with other communities too, as all provide opportunities to make new friends and share food. Participants were keen to celebrate Ukrainian Independence day, Refugee Week and other high days and holidays.



Communication Quantitative Research

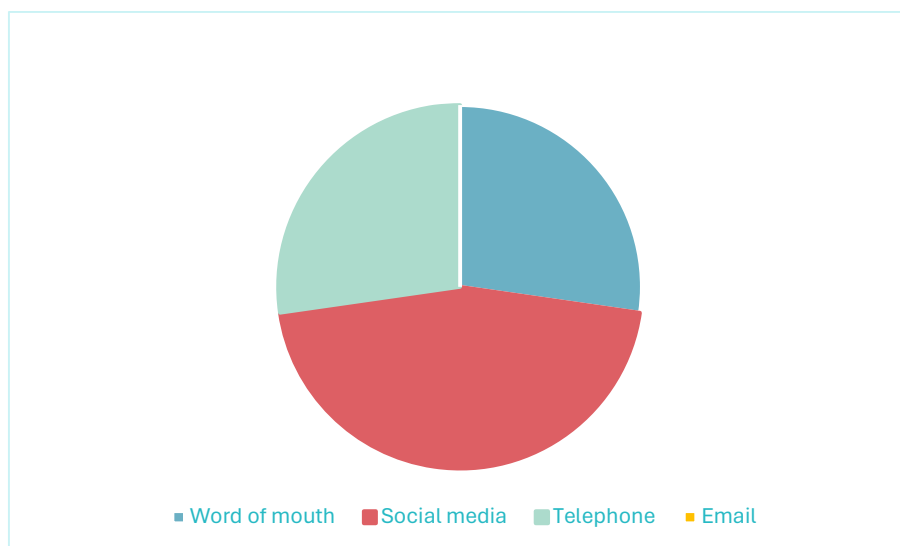
By the end of the workshop it was apparent that effective communication was a barrier to accessing existing services and that any future grants programme should have a clear steer on methods of marketing services to displaced people in Greenwich. The aim of this would be two-fold;

- Avoidance of service and activity duplication
- Increase participants from displaced people

Participants decided to research their own behaviours to inform the grants programme as part of the final workshop evaluation.

We found that word-of-mouth, and telephone calls/messaging were the most effective means of communicating community events. It is worth noting that event audiences built by community organisers and outreach workers were the most prevalent.

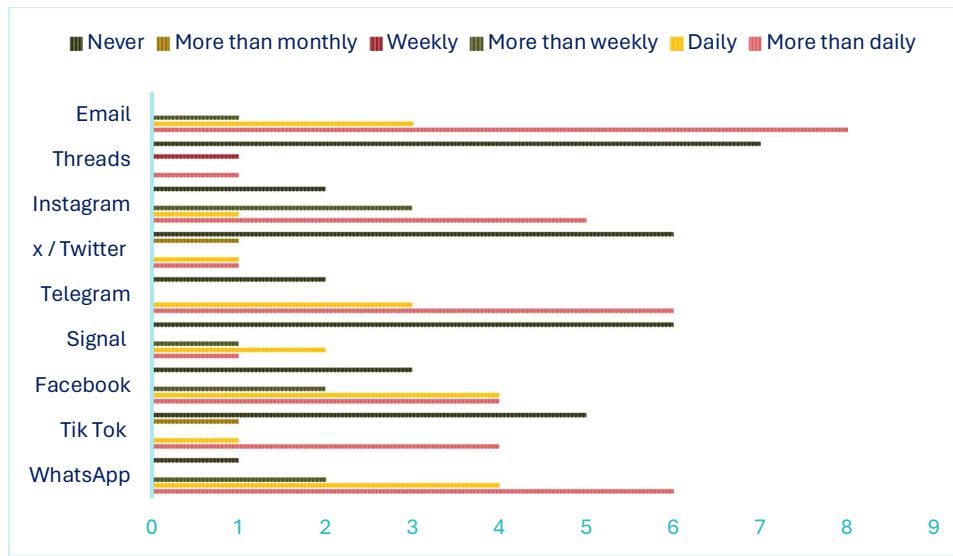
HOW DID YOU FIND OUT ABOUT THE LAST COMMUNITY ACTIVITY YOU WENT TO?



We followed up on the above by asking about the types of social media respondents used most frequently Email, WhatsApp and Telegram came out top. This area of enquiry reflected the importance of outreach workers, community workers and caseworkers in accessing and audience building in Greenwich's displaced communities. As the data suggests that everyone checks their email daily, but email wasn't participants driver to audience build community activity.



HOW OFTEN DO YOU CHECK SOCIAL MEDIA?



Moving forward

In conclusion, participants came away with a clear set of strong recommendations for the Ukraine Together funding pot and a keen commitment to the project and delivering future activities. It was noted that as a group it was important to advocate on behalf of all the communities present and work together to achieve the goals that participants had outlined.

Future activities would include promoting this research to other stakeholders, including Royal Borough of Greenwich, funders that operate within Greenwich, and those companies wishing to add social value to their work.

We agreed to work collaboratively and share our resources as organisations in order to build community cohesion. Everyone felt that the strengthening of our bonds across communities in Greenwich would support long-term sustainability.



“I really liked the way the activities were designed, and the invitation to be involved as much as everyone felt comfortable to. The mix of participants worked well, and I was grateful to have so many people with first-hand experience and for them to share a bit of their stories. Also it was a good opportunity to meet with people working in different organisations in Greenwich.”

Anonymous Ukrainian Participant

ⁱ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-wiltshire-62334985>

ⁱⁱ <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/how-many-ukrainians-live-in-the-uk/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-june-2022/statistics-on-ukrainians-in-the-uk>

^{iv} https://austriaca.at/0xc1aa500e_0x00307bb6.pdf