

Homes for Ukraine (HfU)

Guidance for Assessing Private Fostering Arrangements for Unaccompanied Children under Unaccompanied Minors (UAM) Scheme

1. Introduction

The UK Government started processing applications for unaccompanied children and young people under the Homes for Ukraine (HfU) scheme on 15 July 2022. The application procedure must be used for children already in this country, as well as new arrivals.

The UAM scheme is based on the Private Fostering framework but applies to all UAMs here under HfU (including 16 and 17 year olds) and all UAMs here without their parent/legal guardian (even if they are with a close adult relative).

The Government requires councils to use Private Fostering procedures to assess the suitability of placement arrangements for these children and young people, including for 16-17 year-olds who are otherwise outside the scope of these procedures

These flowcharts set out how the process will operate in the Dorset Council area. For detailed guidance, please see our [Private Fostering procedure](#)

2. The Statutory Background and Local Contact point

General guidance for the scheme is at [Homes for Ukraine: guidance for councils](#)

Specific guidance in respect of unaccompanied children is at

- [Guidance for Councils](#)
- [Guidance for Sponsors](#)
- [Guidance for Parents](#)

The UK Government has produced a [Welcome Guide for Ukrainian Children](#)

The UK Governments point of contact for Homes for Ukraine case queries and Local Authority information webinars is HFUUnaccompaniedMinors@levellingup.gov.uk

Dorset Council's Ukraine Response Team can be contacted at ukraineresponse@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk or 01305 221000

3. Key requirements

Key requirements of the guidance are:

- There is a [designated application process](#)
- There must be 2 forms of consent from a parent/legal guardian to the sponsorship arrangement.
- Sponsors must commit for the full 3 years of leave to remain or until the child's 18th birthday Council approval is sought before departure and once child is in the UK
- Within 24 hours of a child's arrival at the sponsor's home, local councils should carry out an initial visit, consistent with the Private Fostering framework, to confirm the suitability of the living arrangements and establish any immediate welfare needs.
- The core pathway to be followed where a child is notified to Dorset Council by the Home Office is at point 8.

4. Additional Requirements

Not all unaccompanied children from Ukraine will be notified to Dorset Council by the Home Office

NB Where the Home Office fails to notify Dorset Council of an unaccompanied child from Ukraine for whom the council is responsible, the Corporate Director Commissioning and Partnerships must be notified immediately.

- Where previously approved sponsor arrangements break down, we are required to respond and to re-assess the child's needs and circumstance - see Slide 6.
- Slide 8. shows the pathway to be followed where a child is notified to Dorset Council other than by the Home Office

5. Children already in UK

In some circumstances, we may be made aware of unaccompanied children already in Dorset who:

- Travelled to the UK before the introduction of the 'eligible minors' route under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.
- Applied with their parent(s)/legal guardian under the wider Homes for Ukraine scheme but whose parent(s)/legal guardian did not travel with them to the UK.
- Applied/ travelled with their parent(s)/legal guardian under the wider Homes for Ukraine scheme but who have subsequently been left in the UK with a sponsor and/or accompanying adult, either because their parent(s)/legal guardian has subsequently left the country or moved to a different address in the UK.
- Applied/ travelled with their parent(s)/legal guardian under the wider Homes for Ukraine scheme but the parent subsequently dies leaving the child 'unaccompanied.'
- The list is not exhaustive, urgently raise any case of unaccompanied minors from Ukraine found living in Dorset with Ukraine Response Team and Service Manager – Ukraine Response. Checks can be made whether we are already aware and status. Advice can be given whether referral to Children's Advice and Duty Service (CHAD) is required.

See [Annex D](#): Guidance for councils: children without their parent(s) / legal guardian in the UK outside the 'eligible minors' Homes for Ukraine Scheme

In these circumstances, Dorset Children's Services may need to:

- Act if there are safeguarding concerns about the sponsor (in these cases, the Ukrainian Embassy must be informed if the concerns are substantiated consul_gb@mfa.gov.ua)
- Undertake a rematching process
- Provide social work support
- Consider temporarily accommodating the child under Children Act 1989 powers

6. Ending of sponsorship arrangements, rematching & returning to parent

Ending sponsorship

- A sponsorship arrangement can be discontinued at the direction of the sponsor, any accompanying adult relative, the relevant council, the child or the parent or legal guardian.
- There is [a detailed section on what to do in the event that a sponsorship arrangement needs to end for an unaccompanied minor](#)
- Once notified that an arrangement is ending, **the council must consult the child's parent or legal guardian** - details of which will have been included upfront in the UK sponsorship arrangement consent form – to ascertain their wishes about arrangements for their child.
- If the parent cannot be contacted and/or identify alternative arrangements, or there are immediate safeguarding concerns, **the council must consider its statutory duties towards children and take the appropriate action** (which might include accommodating the child / taking into care. Where care proceedings are initiated for a Ukrainian child, the Ukrainian Embassy should be informed using the contact: consul_gb@mfa.gov.ua

Rematching

- Any rematch of a child must be initiated by the parent(s) or legal guardian, and the new prospective host should meet the relevant eligibility criteria for sponsoring/hosting an unaccompanied child.
- The key thing is that there is clear parental consent to any rematch and the council and parents agrees the new arrangement is in the best interests of the child.

Returning to Ukraine/ other country

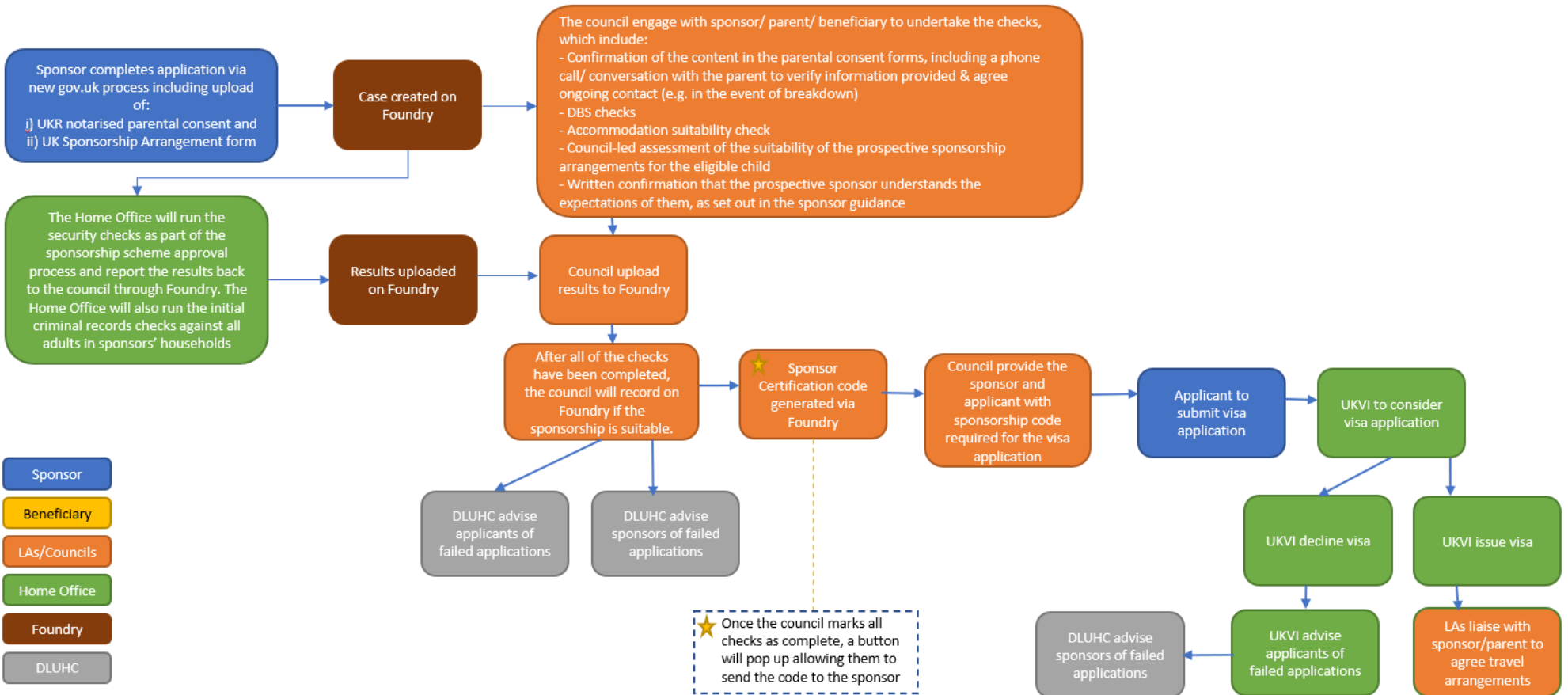
- The council should **request written consent from the parent or legal guardian** confirming this decision is in the best interests of the child and that appropriate travel and reception arrangements have been made.
- We have created [a new consent form](#) on Gov.UK to send to the parents in this scenario. Once the child has left the UK, **councils should also update Foundry to record that they have left sponsorship for tracking and monitoring purposes.**
- Where a council knows that a child is intending to return to Ukraine or go to another country, **the council should seek to alert the Ukrainian Embassy (consul_gb@mfa.gov.ua)** as well as alert the relevant authorities in the country to which the child is moving to at the earliest opportunity so that appropriate safeguarding measures can be put in place on arrival and beyond. See the Department for Education's [guidance for councils on working with foreign authorities](#).

- There are limited levers to prohibit a parent from removing a child from the UK, but if the council does have concerns, they should **consider whether they need to take alternative steps to safeguard the child in line with their statutory duties**, which could include accommodating the child under Children Act 1989 powers or taking them in to care. As above, the Ukrainian Embassy would need to be engaged at this point.

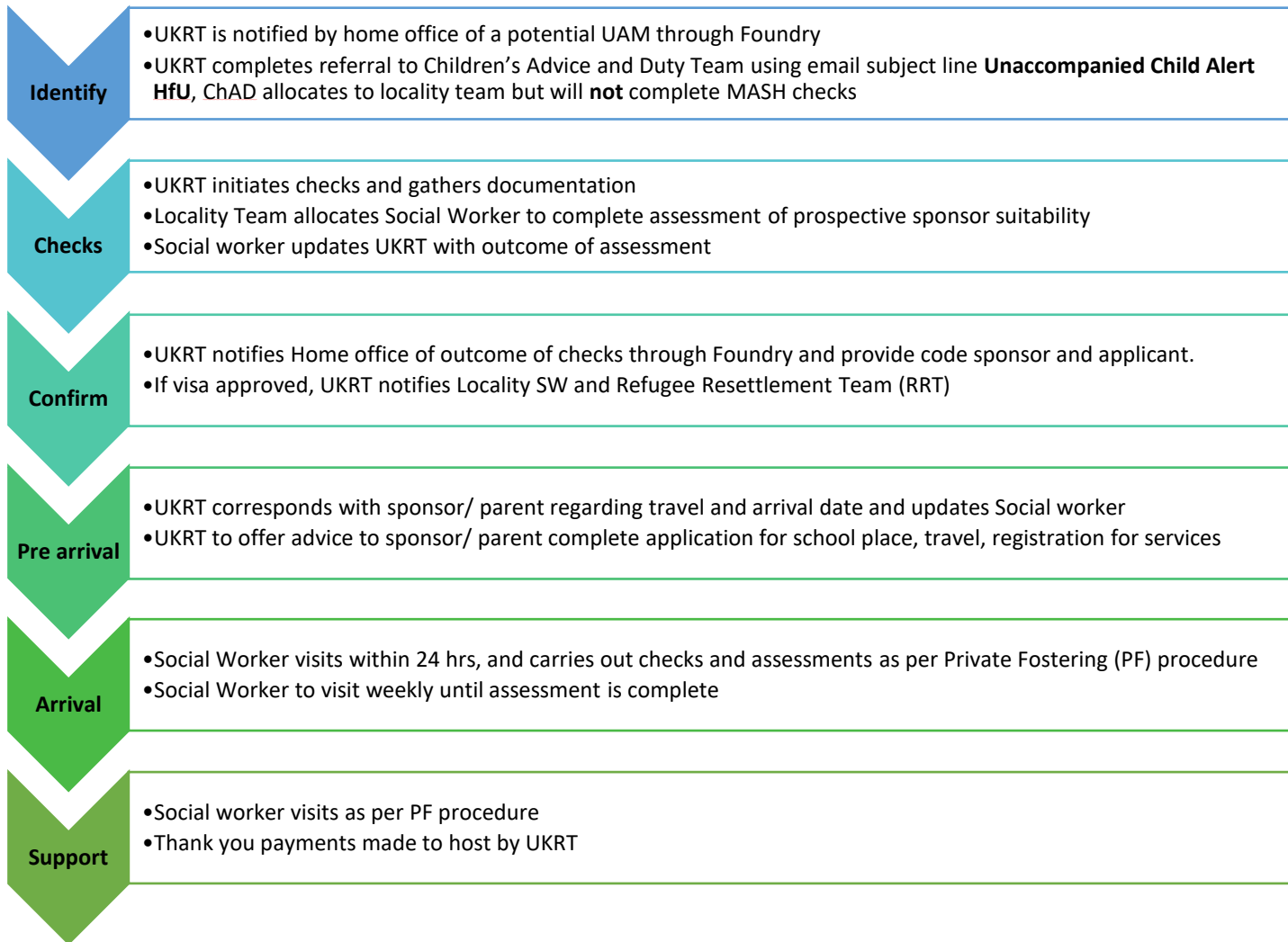
7. Pre-arrival checks

- Complete all checks, including enhanced DBS checks, accommodation checks and the sponsor suitability assessment as soon as possible after receiving parental consent documents. The majority should be processed within 4 – 6 weeks of receiving parental consent documents

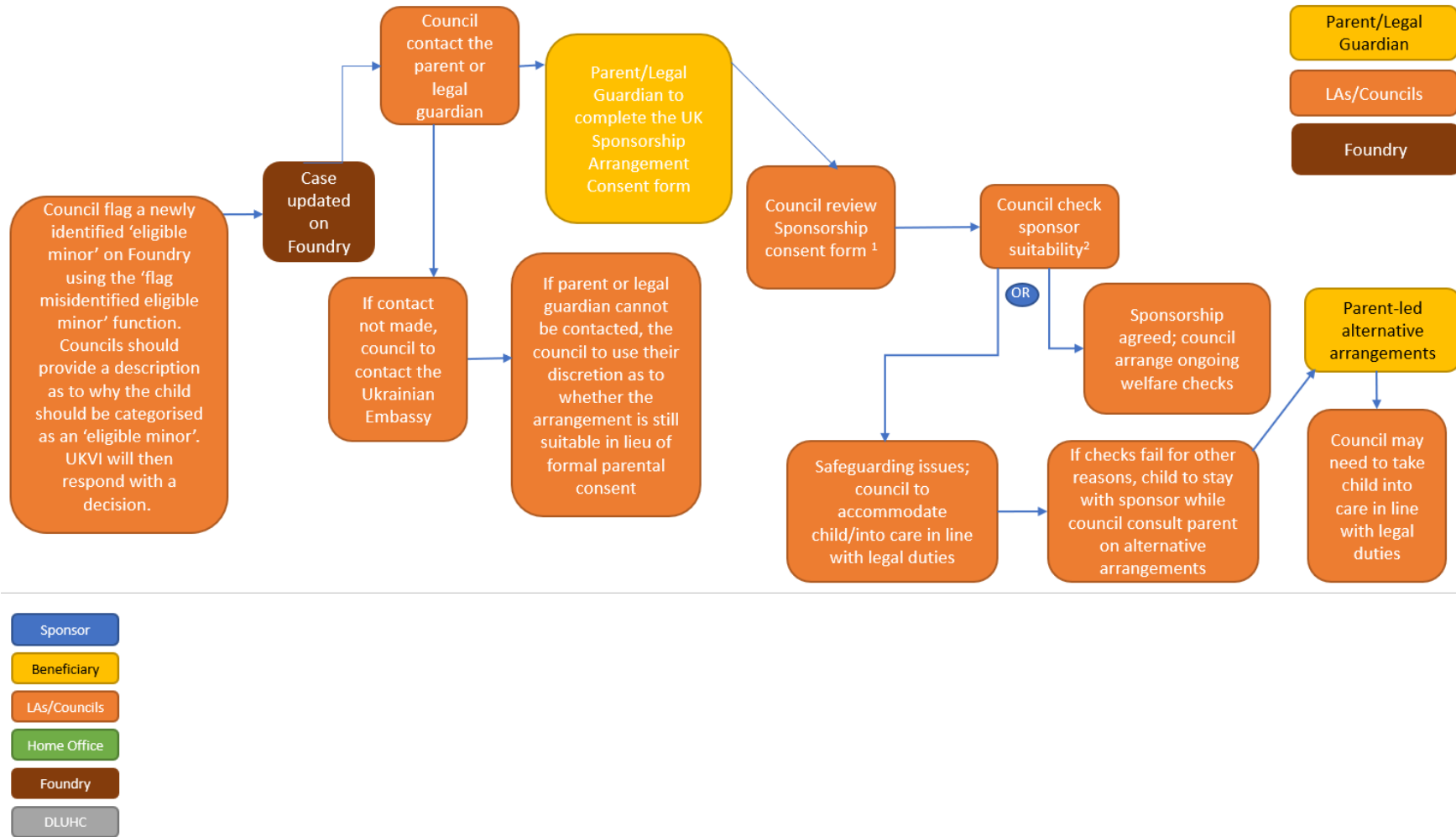
8. System pathway for new unaccompanied children notified by the Home Office



9. Dorset process linked to the above flow chart - new unaccompanied children notified by the Home Office



10. System pathway for unaccompanied children already in the UK



11. Dorset Council Process linked with the above flow chart - unaccompanied children already in the UK

