
NEWS RELEASE



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Sawtry resident prosecuted for fraudulently claiming Ukrainian host payments

Huntingdonshire District Council has successfully prosecuted a Sawtry resident for fraudulently claiming thousands of pounds intended to support Ukrainian guests under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Mihaela Lungu applied to the Homes for Ukraine scheme in 2022, expressing her willingness to host a Ukrainian family who had lost their home due to the war. Her application was approved and she welcomed the family into her home in June 2022. However, by July 2022, the family had moved on from her address.

Despite their departure, Mrs Lungu continued to claim host payments from the council and falsely maintained that the family was still living with her. Over an 18-month period, from July 2022 to January 2024, she received £8,900 in payments to which she was not entitled.

Following a thorough investigation by the council, it was determined that the Ukrainian family was no longer living at the property and the matter was referred to the courts.

Mrs Lungu appeared at Peterborough Magistrates' Court on 13th May 2025, where she pleaded guilty to an offence under the Fraud Act 2006. The Magistrates described the offence as a very serious fraud, noting that a substantial amount of money had been obtained dishonestly and that the offence crossed the custody threshold. Taking into account her guilty plea and cooperation, she was sentenced to 20 weeks imprisonment, suspended for 18 months. She was also ordered to repay the £8,900 in full, pay costs of £1,000 and a £100 victim surcharge.

Cllr Stephen Ferguson, Executive Councillor for Resident Services and Corporate Performance at Huntingdonshire District Council, said: "This case demonstrates the importance of safeguarding public funds and ensuring that support reaches those for whom it is genuinely intended. The Homes for Ukraine scheme has shown the very best of Huntingdonshire, with many residents opening their homes and their hearts to those fleeing unimaginable hardship. The overwhelming majority of hosts have acted with compassion and integrity, and their support has made a hugely positive impact on the lives of Ukrainian families.

"It is deeply regrettable when someone takes advantage of that goodwill, but we remain committed to protecting the integrity of this important scheme. We will take firm action against any abuse of the system."

ENDS

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Corporate Office - Communications Tel 01480 388033 E-mail news@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Pathfinder House St Mary's Street Huntingdon PE29 3TN Tel 01480 388388 www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk