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Convenor  
Education Children and Young People Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
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04 July 2022

Thank you for your letter of 16 June 2022 regarding the issues facing Ukrainian students who have resettled in Scotland and have been able to continue studying remotely with their Ukrainian university that was discussed during the 8 June 2022 meeting of the Education, Children and Young People Committee.

The Scottish Government has been made aware of a potential issue that Ukrainian students who are in a position to continue studying remotely with their Ukrainian university are facing. This has been further brought to our attention by various stakeholders and Members of the Scottish Parliament who have highlighted that some students in this situation may be unable to access financial support from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and are also ineligible for student financial support from any of the UK funding bodies as they are not studying at a UK institution. I understand that this is a potential issue that is affecting resettled Ukrainian students across the UK.

In terms of the student financial support system, I think it's helpful to clarify that Scottish domiciled students who are studying via distance learning are considered for funding purposes as part-time students. This means that they are not eligible for living cost support. The rationale behind this decision reflects the fact that students undertaking part-time or distance learning courses are generally more likely to be able to support their studies through some form of paid employment or will be entitled to support from DWP.

We, therefore, consider that Ukrainian students who are studying via distance learning at a Ukrainian institution should be treated in the same way. This would mean that if they are eligible, based on the relevant work related requirements, should be able to access Universal Credit and any other benefit that they would normally be entitled to.

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Scottish Government officials have in fact been in contact with officials from DWP to discuss this very issue and I understand officials from the UK Government Department for Education have also raised concerns on the same basis.

The Minister for Higher Education, Further Education, Youth Employment and Training, Jamie Hepburn MSP has also written to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions highlighting this as an area of concern. The Minister has urged the Secretary of State to look into this as a matter of urgency with a view to finding a solution to ensure that Ukrainian students who have been forced to flee their own country are offered the relevant support at this difficult time.

The Scottish Government is clear that we need to support Ukrainians and their families to come to the UK and provide them with reassurance about their rights to enter, and stay here in safety.

**Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP**

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