

# Homes for Ukraine Sponsor Toolkit

A resource for those sponsoring Ukrainians

## Getting involved

It's incredible that you have decided to support people fleeing Ukraine. This is not a small undertaking nor something you should go into without seriously considering what this might mean to you and those who you live with. This sponsor toolkit is designed to give you an outline of the support that you might need to provide if you welcome a guest or guests through the Homes for Ukraine programme. This toolkit is not designed for those who have arrived through the Ukraine family visa scheme but might contain some useful information.

The Homes for Ukraine scheme is being designed and developed at pace, so you should ensure that you are using up to date information from gov.uk; we will attempt to keep our materials up to date as the programme develops.

You might find that on consideration, you do not wish to participate in the Homes for Ukraine programme. Don't forget that there are lots of ways in which you can support refugees and ensure our communities welcome newcomers. You might wish to consider getting involved in [Community Sponsorship](#), connect with your local [City of Sanctuary group](#) or find ways to [campaign](#) to show that those who are displaced from their homes are welcome here.

Please keep in mind that if something goes wrong once your guests arrive you should speak to your local authority immediately.

With many thanks,

The Reset Team  
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# Understanding the Homes for Ukraine Programme

This programme is being developed at a fast pace to respond to the emergency need for Ukrainians to find safety here. We recommend that you [sign up for updates](#) from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to stay up to date with changes to the scheme.

The UK Government is asking people to sponsor Ukrainians to come to the UK and to offer them accommodation for a minimum of a six-month period. The accommodation can either be a room in the sponsors' home, or a self-contained property.

If you are offering a room in your own home, you cannot charge rent. If your guest is able to access self-contained accommodation for which they have a tenancy agreement, they may be eligible for the housing benefit part of their social welfare benefits (universal credit) and will be able to pay rent at the [local housing allowance rate](#). You should note that the [housing benefit portion of Universal Credit](#) falls short of most market-rate rental costs.

Those who sponsor will be eligible for a £350 payment per month via their Local Authority subject to satisfying their security checks.

## Who is eligible to be sponsored?

Those applying to be sponsored in the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme must be Ukrainian, or the immediate family member of a Ukrainian national who:

- has been residing in Ukraine on or immediately before 1 January 2022 (including those who have now left Ukraine)
- is currently outside the UK
- has a UK-based sponsor

An immediate family member is your:

- spouse or civil partner
- unmarried partner (you must have been living together in a relationship for at least 2 years)
- child who is under 18
- parent (if you are under 18)
- fiancé(e) or proposed civil partner

Ukrainians can apply for this scheme from Ukraine or any other country.

The person/people being sponsored will not have refugee status in the UK, instead, they will have three years' [leave to remain](#). They will be eligible to access public funds, health care and education and those of working age will be permitted to work.

## Who is eligible to sponsor?

You must be based in the UK and have at least six months leave to remain. You can be of any nationality and able to prove your identity. You must have a place for your guests to stay, this could be a spare room or separate property, it cannot be a bed in shared living space.

## What do I need to provide as a sponsor?

Sponsors must provide accommodation to an individual or family for a minimum of six months. You will also need to provide a welcome to your area. Your local authority will be responsible for the wrap-around support for the people you sponsor, but you should expect to provide some support yourself. Later in the toolkit, we will cover the different types of assistance: registering with a GP, dentist, accessing local and public services and opening a bank account.

The accommodation you provide will need to be safe for your guests. The UK Government states:

*“All accommodation will be different and while there is no set expectation, your accommodation needs to be free from serious health and safety hazards. You should make sure your home is safe for your guests and that it is in a suitable condition. You should also consider how many people you can accommodate so they have sufficient space. Two people should not be in one room unless they are: adult cohabiting partners; a parent and child; two siblings of the same gender if aged over 10; two siblings regardless of gender if aged under 10. Individuals who didn't previously know each other should not be given the same room.”*

Further to this we ask that accommodation:

- *be kept clean and in a reasonable state;*
- *have adequate kitchen and bathroom space;*
- *have access to drinking water;*
- *have a working smoke detector on each floor of the property and other fire safety precautions suitable for the building e.g. fire doors or escape routes as appropriate (further information on [making a home safe from fire](#);*
- *have a working carbon monoxide detector in any room containing a solid fuel burning appliance (e.g. a coal fire, wood burning stove);*
- *have sufficient heating to keep the property at a comfortable temperature;*

- *have safe gas appliances, fittings and flues and have undertaken a Gas Safety check within the last year (see [more information](#));*
- *have safe and working electrics, which a qualified electrician can help with if you are unsure;*
- *be almost entirely free of damp or mould;*
- *have doors and windows at entry level that lock properly;*
- *be easy and safe to move around in, without excessively steep staircases that may cause harm.” (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-scheme-frequently-asked-questions#sponsors>)*

You should expect a housing inspection from your local authority prior to, or shortly after the arrival of your guests.

## How does the process work?

As a sponsor, you must name the person you wish to sponsor. If you do not know someone to sponsor, you can apply to be matched with someone looking to come to the UK via [www.homesforukraine.org.uk](http://www.homesforukraine.org.uk), a service run by Reset. We will be offering training and support to those sponsoring from early April 2022.

If you know the name of the person you wish to sponsor, either you or they are able to apply for a visa here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-visa-under-the-ukraine-sponsorship-scheme>. Every individual in the family who hope to arrive in the UK must complete an individual form, irrespective of age. Organisations such

as [IOM](#) are able to provide support in country for those coming to the UK with the visa process. If someone wishing to come to the UK does not have a valid Ukrainian passport, they must visit a visa application centre. More details on this process are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/find-a-visa-application-centre>

Once the visa application has been submitted, the UK Government will inform your local authority that an application has been made. The local authority will be in contact with you to arrange a home visit and carry out security checks.

Once the Home Office have approved the visa application, providing a permission to enter letter to those

outside of the UK, and the local authority are satisfied, the person coming to the UK will be able to travel here. Responsibility for travel lays with the guest or sponsor. Many airlines and all UK train companies are [offering free travel](#) to Ukrainians who show their Ukrainian passport and travel by train within 48 hours of arriving in the UK.

Throughout the six months that you sponsor someone to the UK, your local authority will be in close contact with you as they provide wrap-around support for the people you sponsor.



If you are unable to continue providing accommodation after six months, you should give as much notice as possible and no less than two months' notice to the people you sponsor for them or the local authority to find onward accommodation.



## Working with your Local Authority

Your local authority will be providing the wrap-around support for the people you sponsor. This could include registering children in school, signing up for benefits and providing access to English language lessons. You can read the guidance issued to England councils here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-guidance-for-councils> - guidance for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales is due to follow.

Each local authority will receive a tariff of £10,500 per person sponsored to their area to provide support. The local authority is responsible for passing the £350 per month funding to sponsors, who host within the home where they reside, from the UK Government. Councils will decide themselves how they will deliver their casework support to those who arrive. They will also be responsible for carrying out security checks on sponsors. Where children are sponsored within a family unit, the local authority will be able to claim funding for education for two to 18-year-olds.

### Vetting from your local authority

It's important to establish a good relationship with your local authority. They will be in contact with you once your guest's visa application has been submitted to the Home Office. Take time to understand the demands and pressures they are under in offering support and do keep in mind that they will have the best interests of the people you sponsor at the forefront at all times.

Be prepared to answer questions in relation to the support you might be offering the people you sponsor; this might feel a little invasive, but it is the responsibility of the local authority to ensure everyone welcomed is safe. You can discuss together how you can work as a partnership.

When you meet with your local authority, ensure that you ask them about what to do if things don't go well, or you or the people you support are not comfortable. Having open and honest conversations at the outset will make things easier if things don't go as planned. You may also want to ask what other local support or services are available for the people you support.

## Finding local support

We know from our work in [Community Sponsorship](#) that the best welcome is created when many people are involved. As you're awaiting to be matched to someone, or a visa to be processed, start researching any organisations or services that might be of interest to someone just arriving. Don't overwhelm new arrivals with information, instead, be ready to offer signposting to activities that might be of interest.

Find charities who support new arrivals locally, from different refugee backgrounds, and search local social media sites. Networking in your local community will be crucial. Get out there and ask what is happening! Make sure people know what you are hoping to achieve and be open to working with others. You might find that some organisations set up to support refugees or those seeking asylum aren't able to assist, so find others who may be willing to help; could your immediate neighbours offer to provide some local orientation for when your guests arrive?

Helping your guests to explore the local area is a key activity for sponsors. We ask that you be guided by what the newcomers would like to see and do, but you'll need to be mindful that they are not going to know what is available and if you feel comfortable, share the things you enjoy doing locally. At a minimum, we suggest showing:

- Local shops – both supermarkets and local shops. Talk through how you get best value for money (e.g., Waitrose/Booths vs Asda/Aldi/Lidl), any customs (e.g., using self-service checks outs and avoiding the carrier bag charge). It may be that the newcomers wish to access culturally appropriate food and products – if you don't know where these shops are locally, now's the time to find out! The cost of produce in the UK might come a surprise; so being ready to talk through budget saving tips can be helpful.
- Organise a town or city tour, this will help you to find out what is important and of interest to the newcomers, and from this you can build the rest of your support. Keep in mind that asking, 'what would you like to do?' isn't helpful, as the newcomers won't know what there is to do locally. Don't forget that simply going out for a coffee and chatting is a fantastic way to get to know people.
- Community services – places of worship, community centres, local leisure activities, healthcare centres, libraries, and banks. Don't forget to ask what interests the newcomers have they might like to share.
- Keep in mind that your guests are likely to be on a low income initially; keep the activities you invite them to free or low-cost.

## Find local charities:

- England and Wales: [GOV.UK charity register search](#)
- Northern Ireland: [The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland charity search](#)
- Scotland: [OSCR Scottish Charity register search](#)
- [Ukrainian Association of Great Britain](#) – branches:

## Thinking about your support: Empowerment, Power and Boundaries

Successful sponsorship is all about helping those you welcome feel confident and able to navigate life in a new country. This can be achieved through adopting an empowerment approach – never doing something *for* someone *without* them.

### Empowerment

Nothing *for* someone *without* them

Be mindful of the power you hold

Listen to challenges and concerns

Make clear what you can and cannot do

Be aware of your own boundaries and limitations

The people you support have been forcibly displaced from their homes. They'll be adjusting to a new culture, way of working, and new customs. They may be navigating this alone, with no connection with people they work with or in their new neighbourhood.

Sponsors can provide the support and local expertise to navigate this adjustment. Feeling integrated is a difficult concept, we will all feel it to different degrees at times and it doesn't happen overnight. Integration is firmly based in our own feelings, experience, and ambitions.

### Empowering the people you support

Thinking about an empowerment approach can help someone make an informed decision, rather than decide for them about their lives. This might feel difficult to get to grips with – you might feel that you can do something quicker or have clear ideas about what you would do in a situation, but your role here is to listen, inform and empower. Some people find it easier to think about how you can help to build someone's

confidence to do something on their own. For example, if you make phone calls on someone's behalf to book a GP appointment because it's quicker and you know what you are doing, how would they do this if you weren't available? Working with someone to make the call themselves, with you in the background supporting them doing this for the first time will help them do this without help the second time.

### Power Imbalance

You are likely to know more about the local area, UK customs and norms than the people you sponsor. With this knowledge comes a potential power imbalance of which you should always be mindful. Newcomers will rely on what you share with them about life in your neighbourhood. You can avoid influencing someone's decisions and choices by:



- Presenting all facts as you know them to be, recognising where these facts are from
- Asking open questions as to the action someone wishes to take, once all options are considered
- Running through the consequences of a decision while remaining impartial
- Be a sounding board for someone as they make a decision – if they would like this
- Once a decision has been made, do not question or suggest this might be the wrong decision
- Reflect together on how the process worked

## Setting Boundaries

We all have boundaries; both you and the people you sponsor. However, your motivation to sponsor is likely to have been that you would like to help someone. As per the empowerment approach, we all need to be ready that someone might not want our help, or it might not be appropriate. It may be that you don't have the time to help someone in the way that they would like. This is absolutely ok!

- Being open about your boundaries is crucial. You might not want to provide lifts in your car or share mealtimes together – this is ok.
- Those you sponsor may not want to talk about what happened in their home country leading to their displacement. Respect this and do not push people to have conversations that they are not comfortable with.
- Communication is key; be steered by what people say and respect these boundaries, try to be consistent as a household in keeping boundaries. If you cross a boundary; apologise and move forward – we all make mistakes at times.

## Privacy and confidentiality

Everyone has a right to live their lives with dignity and privacy. If you're sharing your home with someone, you're likely to encounter personal information. Make sure you check with the people you sponsor how they would like to be introduced, or how they would like to be referred to. Referring to someone as 'my refugee' shows a disrespect for their individuality and dignity. They may not want to be referred to as refugees at all. Also, ensure you ask permission before taking photos or sharing photos of your guests. Respect what they decide.

You have a right to privacy too, of course. If your guest asks questions that you do not wish to answer, explain this is the case and move the conversation along.

## Preparing your property for hosting

When preparing the property or room you are offering, consider the following:

- If you are offering a spare room in your home to someone you sponsor, make sure that it's clean and any personal items you need access to are removed. Ensure the person staying in that room feels and knows that it belongs to them, and that you will respect their privacy.
- Ensure there's plenty of storage available if needed, if this is not in the same room, make sure the person you sponsor can have unrestricted access to this. Imagine if you had brought everything you own with you, and how important those items would be to you.
- Provide bed linen, towels and other items they may need.
- Provide spare keys in order for the people you sponsor to come and go as they please. Ensure you provide your full address so that they can find their way back should they get lost; help to install google maps on a phone if needed.
- Make sure they have space to store their own food in fridges and cupboards.
- Provide a welcome pack of items that will belong to the person/people you sponsor. This could include toiletries (don't forget towels or tampons for women), nappies for babies, crockery, culturally appropriate food or toys for children.
- If your guest is bringing a pet, make sure they have the things they need.
- If your home is non-smoking, and your guest is a smoker, be clear with your guest where they can and cannot smoke.
- You may decide between sponsor and guest that you will cook and eat together; or you may not. Be open and clear with one another about what you would like.
- Everyone will have 'house rules' – discuss with those who already share your home in advance what these are, and ensure your guest knows these too. Living with someone is hard, be prepared to be clear, and to compromise.

Further guidance will follow.

## Financial matters

You may not charge your guest rent or bills whilst you sponsor them in your own home, however, if they live in a separate property with a rental agreement, they may be able to pay rent at the [local housing allowance rate](#) as they should qualify for the housing benefit part of their universal credit. If they stay in your home with you, you will receive a £350 monthly payment from the council toward your costs whilst you sponsor.

It's likely that the person or people you sponsor will be on a low income initially in the UK and offering assistance in budgeting and understanding living costs in the country will be useful.

### Bank Accounts

Your guest may need your help opening a bank account when they arrive. Because your guest is new to the UK, will be more complicated than your experience of opening an account, however, having a UK bank account is essential for receiving benefits. A useful guide to opening a bank account for refugees has been put together by Refugee Council which you can access [here](#). Whilst those you sponsor will not have refugee status; it will still be useful. We understand that the UK Government are urging banks to waive their requirement to have proof of address to open bank accounts.

If your guest approaches you for assistance, be ready to support and to discuss options. This could include:

- Visiting branches with your guest to find out what documentation they require to open an account
- Explaining the availability of online accounts (e.g., Monzo, Starling, Monese) and how these work
- Talking openly about the ways to pay in the UK – use of debit cards, phones and watches; it might be that the newcomers are more used to a cash-based system. Do explain how to spot cash machines that charge, and how to keep your banking details safe.

### Cost of living/budgeting

It can feel very awkward to talk about money, and those you sponsor absolutely do not have to do this with you. However, if this does come up, don't shy away from talking about the cost of living.

The UK is an expensive place to live. For example, 1kg of apples is 80% more expensive in the UK than in Ukraine. You can look up more comparisons between cost of living in countries here: <https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/comparison.jsp>

Whilst you can't change the overall cost of life in the UK, you can offer budgeting tips and ways to save money.

## **Transport**

Transport can be expensive; help those you sponsor explore how they can reduce costs. Is there a bike scheme for those on a low income in your area, providing free or low-cost bikes?

If your guests are under 25, they may wish to apply for a young person's railcard, reducing the cost of train tickets: <https://www.railcard.co.uk/16-25/> These are also available for those aged 26-30: <https://www.railcard.co.uk/about-railcards/>

Help your guests to explore discount schemes available locally. For example: it might be cheaper to purchase an annual bus pass.

## **Other financial matters**

Talk openly about how there are scammers in the UK, and why it's important to never give out your personal details or bank details unless you are sure who this is for. This is a good guide to avoiding scams:

<https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/shopping/stop-scams/>

Some of our Community Sponsorship materials on managing financial disappointment may be useful: <https://training-resetuk.org/toolkit/working-with-refugees/dealing-with-challenges/managing-financial-disappointment>



## **Safeguarding**

We all have a responsibility to one another to prevent ourselves and one another from harm. Your local authority will have a safeguarding board and when you meet, you should make sure that you ask about how you can report a safeguarding concern relating to the person you are sponsoring should it be needed. Your role is not to take on the place of statutory services, but we all have a role to report whether there are concerns about the welfare of children or vulnerable adults and take action to address them where appropriate. This may involve reporting concerns to the relevant statutory services (ideally with the consent of the people concerned, where possible) and working with them to address the concern.

Don't shy away from talking about safeguarding responsibilities with your guest, it's important for them to understand what is expected in the UK. For example, sharing that it's illegal to smack a child in Scotland and Wales and how the use of positive parenting is expected throughout the UK is extremely useful information. If you have a safeguarding concern regarding your guest, or you are concerned about their behaviour, you should contact your local authority immediately. If it is an emergency, contact 999.

### **Emergencies**

Ensure that when they arrive, you speak to your guest about how to contact the emergency services. In Ukraine, they have different numbers for the different services, whereas in the UK we have 999 for emergencies and 101 for non-emergency police contact, and 111 for non-emergency healthcare. Make sure you explain that if someone does not speak English, they can say the name of the language they do speak (in English) for the call handler to source an interpreter.

## Integration Support

When your guest arrives, there is likely to be several areas of support they will need. Be mindful where your responsibility ends and the local authority responsibility begins, if you are in doubt, check with your local authority.

**Benefits** – all those arriving will be eligible for social welfare benefits. Those you support will need to register for their Universal Credit payments, which the local authority will help them with. There will be a delay between registering and receiving their first payment. The local authority will be providing initial cash payments to cover this period. Turn2Us have a great website to explain the benefits process: <https://www.turn2us.org.uk/Get-Support>

**Employment:** All adults who arrive through the Homes for Ukraine programme will be able to work. The Job Centre is responsible for assisting in job searches; however, you may wish to talk to your guest about how the application process for jobs or volunteering has worked in your experience. Offering to help practice interviews can also be helpful. There are some specialist recruitment agencies such as [Bridge of Hope](#) and [Refugee Employment Network](#).

**Healthcare** – all those arriving will have a right to access healthcare and will need to register with a GP. Help your guest find out their local GP surgery and the registration process; offer to provide assistance in completing registration forms if needed and go through the booking system with them.

There is no need for you to know, or for your guest to share, their medical history or needs with you. It will be useful to remind your guest of the different local medical services they can access:

- GP surgery - confidential health service, where interpreters can be provided on request. Everything discussed remains between doctor and patient. The GP can refer to specialists, prescribe medication and provide support around family planning and mental health services.
- Pharmacy – not only where you pick up your prescription that the GP has made but will be able to advise on common or less serious medical conditions and will have an extensive range of medication you do not require a prescription for. Do explain how prescriptions are charged.
- Dentist – guests should be able to access NHS dentists, however, there are huge delays in many areas for free dental care for everyone, and it's usual to have to wait. Emergency dental need can be treated by calling 111 for a referral, but this will not cover ongoing treatment.
- Mental Health Services – flag that support is available via the GP, and point to <https://saneukraineonline.org/> - a free online service

**Language support** – it might be that your guest can speak English or might need to learn. It can feel challenging when you support someone who you do not share a language with, but it is not impossible to manage. Make sure you have an interpreting app installed on your phone, such as google translate – the translation might not always be perfect, so be ready to try in other ways. There might be ESOL (English as a second language) classes available locally or online. Your local authority might be able to guide your guest to classes.

**Schools** – your local authority will be responsible for registering children in schools. Your guests might require assistance in applying for free school meals once their benefits have arrived, or preparing children to go to school, as well as navigating the differences in the schooling system. Make sure you speak to your local authority about what support you offer.

## Useful links

- [City of Sanctuary](#) have written a blog on what to think about before you sponsor
- [NSPCC Positive Parenting](#) guides
- [Pickwell Foundation](#) – resources and guidance for sponsors in North Devon & Torridge, although many resources will be useful for everyone in England
- [Sane Ukraine](#) – trauma support for Ukrainians
- [Ukraine Advice Project](#) – free immigration advice
- [VITA Network](#) – templates and guidance for preparing to sponsor