

Information for Ukrainian nationals seeking to live with family members in the UK

The Ukraine Family Scheme

The Ukraine Family Scheme allows applicants to join family members or extend their stay in the UK, for up to 3 years. It is free to apply, and applicants will be able to live, work and study in the UK and access public funds. There is more information on how to apply on this website <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-ukraine-family-scheme-visa> including a 24/7 free helpline number to call for if you need any assistance.

Eligibility

To apply to the Ukraine Family Scheme, you must:

- be applying to join or accompany your UK-based family member; and
- be Ukrainian or the immediate family member of a Ukrainian national who is applying to the scheme; and
- have been residing in Ukraine on or immediately before 1 January 2022 (including those who have now left Ukraine)

You can apply if you've already arrived in the UK and meet the requirements above.

If you're a Ukrainian national who had permission to stay in the UK on or before 18 March 2022, you will be able to apply to the Ukraine Extension Scheme instead from 3 May 2022. Your partner and children can also apply if they're already in the UK as your 'dependents'. If you previously had permission to stay in the UK but it has expired since 1 January 2022, you will also be eligible to apply.

UK-based family member

Your family member must be one of the following:

- a British national
- someone settled in the UK - for example, they have indefinite leave to remain, settled status or proof of permanent residence
- someone from the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland who has pre-settled status and started living in the UK before 1 January 2021
- someone with refugee status or humanitarian protection in the UK

You must provide evidence that your UK-based family member is one of the following:

- an immediate family member
- an extended family member
- an immediate family member of an extended family member

Full details of eligible family members are available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-ukraine-family-scheme-visa>

You might also be eligible for the [EU Settlement Scheme Family Permit](#) if you are the family member of someone who is living in the UK with settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme who is from the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland. You can choose which scheme you apply for but please do not apply to both the Ukraine Family Scheme and the EU Settlement Scheme Family Permit.

How to Apply

You must [apply online for the Ukraine Family Scheme](#) if you are outside the UK. If you are granted permission under the Ukraine Family Scheme you will receive either:

- an official letter of permission (if you hold a valid Ukrainian international passport)
- a visa (if you attended a Visa Application Centre because you do not hold a valid Ukrainian international passport)

More information about this is available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-ukraine-family-scheme-visa>

Support

Financial Support

If you qualify for the Ukraine Family Scheme you can receive financial support while a claim for benefits is progressed. You can call to speak to someone about this on 03000 267900 or use this link if you prefer, [Support and Advice for Ukrainian Refugees and Sponsors - doitonline - Information - Durham](#)

Jobcentre Plus

Those arriving in the UK under the Ukraine Family Scheme will be able to work, access benefits and public funds. It is recommended that individuals apply online immediately upon arrival at [Gov.uk: How to claim Universal Credit](#).

If an interpreter is required, it is recommended that an application is made by telephone on 0800 328 5644.

To verify identity, you will be invited to attend a local Jobcentre Plus office with official documentation. You will be contacted direct by Jobcentre Plus to arrange this.

The Jobcentre Work Coach will assist with an application for a National Insurance number during this appointment, where necessary. Work Coaches will also assist with an application for Child Benefit, where applicable.

You will need to agree to a Claimant Commitment as part of the Universal Credit application process. This will be agreed with your Work Coach and will set out what you agree to do to prepare for and look for work.

Register with a doctor

The National Health Service (NHS) provides health services to people living in the UK. Most of these services are free.

In the UK, family doctors are called General Practitioners (GPs.) They work in local GP practices. A GP is usually the first doctor you will see when accessing healthcare. You may also see other members of the GP practice team including practice nurses, midwives, health visitors, health care assistants and pharmacists.

You need to register with a GP practice as soon as you can when you arrive in the UK so you can see a GP, or other health care professional, when you are sick.

Further information can be found at [registering with your local GP practice](#) is available.

More information can be found at [How to register with a GP Practice](#)

School places for children and young people

Parents/carers of Ukrainian children and young people can apply for a school place and places will be offered at the school applied for if it has places available. If the preferred school(s) does not have a spare place, a place will be offered at the school closest to the home address that does have a place available.

Parents or carers need to [complete the school admissions form](#) for each child who needs a school place. The completed form should be emailed to schooladmissions@durham.gov.uk or posted to School Places and Admissions, Durham County Council, Green Lane, Spennymoor DL16 6JQ.

When you are informed of the school place offered, you will also be advised whether free home to school transport will be provided. A separate application for school transport will not be necessary.

If you require information about how to apply for a school place, or details of schools in the local area that have spare places, please contact School Admissions on 03000 265893; 03000 265894; or 03000 265777 with:

- The name of your child or children
- Their date of birth
- The full address (including postcode) of where you're staying.

English language support

If English isn't your first language, ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) courses will help you to develop your communication skills for everyday situations. The courses also offer an opportunity to work with students from different countries, make new friends, boost your confidence, as well as learn how to read, write, and speak clearly in English.

For information on courses, call 03000 266115 or email durhamlearn@durham.gov.uk

Mental Health Support

Here are some useful sources of mental health support:

Adults:

- **Every mind matters**, can help with expert advice, practical tips and personalised actions to help you stay on top of your mental wellbeing www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/
- **Mind**, there to make sure no one has to face a mental health problem alone www.mind.org.uk
- **Rethink**, supporting people affected by a mental health problem www.rethink.org
- **Durham Mental Wellbeing Alliance**, a free service for clients to access that provides mental health, wellbeing and recovery services to those needing support www.durhammentalwellbeingalliance.org
- Your **General Practitioner (Doctor)**, see earlier
- **Advice in County Durham**, a partnership initiative making it easier for you to access the right advice and support www.adviceincountydurham.org.uk

Children and young people:

- **One point**, for advice and practical support across all aspects of family life. 03000 261 111
- **Investing in children**, a children's rights organisation, creating spaces to be heard, info@investinginchildren.net
- **Kooth**, a free, safe anonymous online support for young people aged 11+ www.kooth.com
- **Young minds**, support for mental health www.youngminds.org.uk
- **Childline**, a free, private and confidential service where children can talk about anything www.childline.org.uk 0800 1111
- **Durham Works** (for 16-24 yr olds), supporting 16-24 year olds not in education, employment or training www.durhamworks.info/

What do I need to know about life in the UK?

The British Red Cross has produced an information leaflet to provide arrivals with useful information [information-leaflet-for-ukrainians-arriving-in-the-uk.pdf](http://redcross.org.uk/information-leaflet-for-ukrainians-arriving-in-the-uk.pdf) (redcross.org.uk) which has also been translated to Ukrainian [information-leaflet-for-ukrainians-arriving-in-the-uk_ukrainian.pdf](http://redcross.org.uk/information-leaflet-for-ukrainians-arriving-in-the-uk_ukrainian.pdf) (redcross.org.uk)

How to find missing family in Ukraine

If you have lost contact with your family in Ukraine during the conflict and you know they have crossed the border, please keep trying to contact them. It may be a temporary loss of contact as they travel to other countries with different phone networks.

If you are unable to contact your family and you think they are still within the territory of Ukraine, the British Red Cross [international family tracing service](#) may be able to help.


Other help and useful links


- **Translation support**

There are several tools and apps which can be used to support communications. Although we cannot recommend any particular provision, the three suggestions below offer spoken options, which can be helpful in an emergency situation.

Please remember that the more you say, the less accurate the translation usually is, and none are 100 per cent reliable.

Google Translate app 

Microsoft Interpreter  (The following Youtube link shows you how to use this: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7EbbeJPKgc&t=1s>)

SayHi Translate app 

- **North East Migration Partnership**

The [North East Migration Partnership website](#) includes links to pages and useful resources.

- **Barnardo's free helpline to support Ukrainian families**

Barnardo's has set up the Ukrainian Support Helpline. The helpline is available to anyone fleeing the conflict in Ukraine. Barnardo's free helpline is 0800 148 8586 and is staffed by English, Ukrainian and Russian speakers. The helpline is open Monday to Friday, 10am-8pm and Saturday, 10am-3pm.

A dedicated email address ukrainiansupport@barnardos.org.uk and webpage <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/what-we-do/helping-families/ukrainian-helpline> have been set up for Ukrainians in need of assistance.

- **Free initial legal advice**

[Ukraine Advice Project UK](#) has been established by a group of legal professionals with immigration expertise to connect Ukrainian citizens with free initial legal advice on immigration, visas, and asylum.

- **Advice in County Durham**

[Advice in County Durham](#) offers an easy route to access the right advice and support, covering a range of things including finance, housing, employment, and debt.

- **Free books and audiobooks**

Multimedia content provider Odilo offers a free app for both Android and iOS that includes 3,000 e-books and audiobooks in a variety of genres, including 1,700 Ukrainian titles and 500 in English. There is material for both children and adults.

Links to the app are as follows:

- Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=es.odilo.ukraine>
- iOS: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/ukraine-unlimited-learning/id1615037168>
- A coalition of anti-slavery and human rights groups has launched a new website for Ukrainian refugees in the UK, aimed at keeping them safe from trafficking and helping them adjust to their new home. www.ukrainianswelcome.org is a "one-stop shop" of useful websites, helplines, and other information – anything from where to get basic travel and housing advice to opening a bank account and understanding your rights as a worker.

Last update 12 July 2023