

Ukrainian Refugees

Housing & Benefits Rights



This factsheet outlines the housing & benefits rights of Ukrainian nationals who have entered the UK having fled the war in Ukraine.

The Ukraine schemes

In response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Government set up two schemes to assist Ukrainian refugees from the war:

- [Homes for Ukraine](#) – allows Ukrainians to be sponsored by UK residents who have accommodation available for at least six months.
- [Ukraine Family Scheme](#) - allows family members of British nationals and people settled in the UK to come to the country.

The UK government have issued a guide for Ukrainians arriving in the UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/welcome-a-guide-for-ukrainians-arriving-in-the-uk>

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1097959/Ukraine_welcome_guide_updated.pdf

Ukrainian and Russian versions are now available here:

Ласкаво просимо: довідник для українців, які прибувають у Велику Британію:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/welcome-a-guide-for-ukrainians-arriving-in-the-uk.uk>

Добро пожаловать: руководство для граждан Украины, прибывающих в

Великобританию: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/welcome-a-guide-for-ukrainians-arriving-in-the-uk.ru>

Recourse to Public Funds – Access to benefits and help with housing

Ukrainians who have come to the UK under the Ukraine schemes will normally have recourse to public funds, meaning that they can claim benefits and get assistance with housing.

Ukrainian nationals who left the country following the Russian invasion on 24 February 2022 will have recourse to public funds if they:

- Were resident in Ukraine before 1 January 2022 and
- have been given leave to enter the UK, and
- are not subject to a no recourse to public funds condition.

Access to benefits

Ukrainian nationals who have recourse to public funds will be entitled to claim benefits such as Universal Credit, Housing Benefit, Pension Credit, Personal Independence Payment, Child Disability Living Allowance and Carers Allowance and Attendance Allowance.

There are [benefits calculators](#) to help determine a person's entitlement. Work Coaches in Jobcentres can also help with making online claims.

Financial support for renting

Financial help with rent can be claimed from Universal Credit (Universal Credit Housing Element UCHE) or Housing Benefit.

For private rented accommodation, the maximum amount of benefit that a household receives towards the rent is known as the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and depends how many people are in their household and where the property is.

The [LHA bedroom calculator](#) shows the number of bedrooms the household is entitled to and this site shows the LHA rate by postcode or local authority.

Right to Rent – access to private rented properties

Every prospective private sector tenant has to prove to their landlord that they have the 'right to rent' before they can be granted a tenancy.

Ukrainians who have entered the country under the Ukraine schemes will have a time-limited right to rent, initially for 12 months, this will be extended to up to 3 years if the person is granted a residence permit for a longer period.

Prospective landlords will ask for proof of the right to rent and cannot grant a tenancy until they have this proof.

The housing register – social housing

Ukrainians in the country under the Ukraine schemes can apply for social housing (Council and housing association) if they meet the local connection criteria and have a housing need.

Gateway to Homechoice is a choice-based lettings system, where social housing properties are advertised in the local authority areas of Babergh, Braintree, Colchester, East Suffolk, Ipswich, Maldon and Mid Suffolk.

Properties that are available for rent will be advertised each week:

<https://www.gatewaytohomechoice.org.uk/>

The local connection criteria for the Gateway can be found in our [Allocations Policy](#) sections #4.4 – 4.10:

- Their only or principal home is within the boundaries of the district or borough covered by the scheme.
- They were placed in specialised housing which is not available in the area of the scheme but had a local connection previously through residence.
- They (not a member of their household) are in permanent paid work in one of the partner districts or boroughs.
- They have a son, daughter, brother, sister, mother or father, who is aged 18 or over and lives in the area of the scheme and has done so for at least five years.
- A family member may live within different Gateway local authority areas as long as they have continuously lived within the Gateway area of operation for 5 years and this will give their close family member a local connection subject to any individual property restrictions, e.g. s106 or local lettings plan. The local connection will be where the family member currently lives and the corresponding local authority will host the application.

Waiting times to be rehoused from the Gateway housing register

There is a shortage of social housing. With a few exceptions, the waiting time to be rehoused into social housing is long. People will wait, on average, over a year and for more information on the length of waiting times, please use the [average wait time tool](#) and recent lets [Property Search](#). This information will give you a better idea of how popular a particular property or area is and how long you would normally have to wait. You can then decide whether to look for other types of property or areas where you may not have to wait as long.

Waiting times can be shorter for people aged over 60 (55 for some housing associations) who want to go into retirement housing (also known as sheltered housing).

More FAQs can be found here:

<https://www.gatewaytohomechoice.org.uk/content/Information/frequentlyaskedquestions>

Assistance when homeless or at risk of homelessness

Ukraine scheme residents can apply to the Gateway local authorities for help if they are homeless, or at risk of homelessness within 56 days.

<https://www.gatewaytohomechoice.org.uk/>

Ukraine Refugee Sponsors

Sponsors are required to meet the eligibility and suitability requirements to be approved as a sponsor: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-sponsor-guidance#eligibility>.

Useful contacts

Essex County Council - <https://www.essex.gov.uk/news/support-for-arrivals-under-homes-for-ukraine-scheme>

Suffolk County Council - <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/community-and-safety/communities/community-engagement/support-for-refugees/support-for-ukraine/ukraine-information-for-guests/>

Barnardo's free helpline to support Ukrainian families: Barnardo's has set up a Ukrainian Support Helpline to provide a holistic support service. Barnardo's free helpline (0800 148 8586) is staffed by English, Ukrainian and Russian speakers, to offer support to children and families arriving in the UK from Ukraine. The helpline is open Monday – Friday (10:00am – 8:00pm) and Saturday (10:00am – 3:00pm).

You can also email ukrainiansupport@barnardos.org.uk.

The Refugee Council: 0808 196 7272

<https://refugeecouncil.org.uk/information/information-on-ukraine/>

Citizens Advice Bureau: 0800 144 8848 <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

Disasters Emergency Committee Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal – a coalition of 15 UK charities such as British Red Cross, Oxfam, UNICEF, Save the Children, and World Vision has launched an appeal to provide emergency aid and relief to those suffering helping to providing food, water and shelter to those fleeing the conflict.: <https://www.dec.org.uk/appeal/ukraine-humanitarian-appeal>

British Red Cross – [Help for Ukrainian Nationals advice in English, Ukrainian and Russian.](#)

Shelter – [Housing Advice](#)