

FAQs – Homes for Ukraine scheme

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Please note, GOV.UK has FAQs about how the scheme will be delivered, who is eligible and what accommodation sponsors must offer: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-scheme-frequently-asked-questions>

What is the process of the Homes for Ukraine scheme?

1. Sponsor and guest find each other and agree to a match.
2. Either the sponsor or the guest fills out the single visa application form online using both parties' details.
3. Passport numbers (alongside completion of eligibility questions and other personal details) for both guests and sponsors will be required to complete the application online. The guest will also need to upload a scan of their passport. If the guest does not possess a passport, they will be required to travel to a visa application centre to process their biometrics.
4. After the application is submitted, security checks are done on both the sponsor, all other adults in the sponsor's household, and the guest.
5. Once both sponsor and guest have passed the checks, the Home Office will issue the guest with a permit to travel.
6. The guest can then travel to the UK and coordinate their arrival with the sponsor.

What should I do if I haven't heard about the status of my application?

There are delays in processing the initial checks on applications, which are carried out by the Home Office, before visas and permission to travel letters are issued. They are working through them as quickly as they can. We can only ask you to be patient.

Background checks

What checks need to be done on sponsors?

- **Accommodation checks** to make sure your accommodation is fit for purpose
- **Basic DBS checks** on all adults from your household (unless the below applies)
- **Enhanced DBS checks** on all people aged 16+ in your household if you are hosting children under 18
- **Enhanced DBS check with check of the Adults' Barred List** if you are hosting a vulnerable adult (due to illness, disability or age) who has particular needs.

When will the accommodation check be done?

Accommodation checks are carried out by your local city, district or borough council. When ECC receives notification of applications from sponsors, it is passed on to district councils so they can carry out accommodation checks. They aim to check your accommodation in person before the guest arrives, where possible.

When will the DBS checks be done?

ECC receives data from the government every week with information about sponsors, although this data does not tell us which stage an application is at.

We are working through contacting sponsors, so that we can begin the process of carrying out safeguarding checks. Letters are then sent to sponsors with further details and information which we need, including when it is anticipated your guests from Ukraine will be arriving. Over 60% of sponsors in Essex have been contacted by the County Council.

My guest is due to arrive and I still haven't heard about the checks

If you haven't yet heard from us about DBS checks, please email BusinessSupport.FamilyOps@essex.gov.uk with the following information:

- Your name
- Your address
- Name(s) of the guest(s)
- Whether your guests include children aged 0 to 18 year old
- Date of arrival
- The name of the district, city or borough council, that covers the area you live in.

In the subject line put: Homes for Ukraine Arrival Notification: [add your surname]

This will help us to make sure safeguarding and accommodation checks, thank you payments, and support for children can be arranged.

If you do not have access to email, please phone us on 0345 603 7627 and ask to speak to our Homes for Ukraine team.

Do I need to pay for any of the checks?

No, there is no fee for the accommodation check and local councils are covering the cost of any DBS checks with funding from the government.

When your guest arrives in the UK

What support will my guest be given on arrival?

Along with partners, we have set up a welcome point for Ukrainians at Stansted Airport.

This includes:

- Welcome Point adjacent to the Arrivals Hall, staffed by volunteers who can provide answers to many immediate questions and can also access interpretation services on the telephone.
- The Welcome Point is also a good meeting spot if you and your Ukrainian guest(s) are unable to find each other in the Arrivals Hall, which can often be busy.
- The Welcome Point volunteers can provide more in-depth humanitarian support to Ukrainian nationals who don't have other arrangements, including liaison with various local authorities if emergency accommodation is required.

Can my guest get free travel to my home?

The Department for Transport has announced free onward travel for Ukrainian arrivals.

All Ukrainian arrivals will get a free single one-way journey from a port of entry (like the airport) to their final destination.

This can be via national rail, bus, light rail, and coach. It is free of charge anywhere in England, Scotland and Wales.

Ukrainians should show their Ukrainian passport and accompanying boarding pass dated within the last 48 hours to any frontline staff.

Guests will also be able to travel for free across London using TfL's London Underground, Docklands Light Railway (DLR), bus and tram services. Further information is available at www.nationalrail.co.uk/ukraine

How does my guest get their £200 interim payment?

Guests will get an interim payment of £200 per guest. The £200 payment does not need to be repaid.

Who will issue the payment and how you will receive it is yet to be finalised. We anticipate the payment will be made via a payment card, vouchers or cash.

How do I get my £350 thank you payment?

You are eligible for an optional 'thank you' payment of £350 per month by accommodating one or more households.

The £350 'thank you' payment is limited to one payment per sponsor household, even if you host more than one guest or provide more than one property. You will continue to receive payments for as long as you sponsor somebody and for up to 12 months.

The process for payment to be made is yet to be finalised and councils are still awaiting guidance from government. But it is important to note that the £350 monthly payment is not automatic and you will have to request it. It will be made in arrears and probably via your local city, district or borough council.

These payments do not affect benefit entitlement and will remain tax-free.

Other ways to support your guest

Can my guest get Universal Credit or other financial support?

Yes, Ukrainian nationals can access Universal Credit as soon as they arrive in the UK. Universal Credit is a monthly payment to help with living costs.

For details and to apply for Universal Credit, visit: www.gov.uk/universal-credit

If you or they have questions about how Universal Credit works, you can call:

- 0800 328 5644 to speak to Universal Credit Full Service
- 0800 144 8 444 to speak to Citizens Advice Help to Claim

Ukrainian nationals are also eligible for:

- Housing Benefit
- Pension Credit
- Personal Independence Payment
- Child Disability Living Allowance
- Carers Allowance
- Attendance Allowance

Those who meet the criteria are eligible for the contributions-based Employment and Support Allowance and Jobseekers Allowance.

Ukrainian nationals do not need to go through certain checks, such as the Habitual Residency Test, which will speed up any claims they make.

Visit [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) to find out more and apply.

Can my guest set up a bank account?

Yes. To receive Universal Credit and other benefits, Ukrainian nationals will need to open a bank account. They can open a bank account by visiting any bank. They will need to have documents that show their identity and immigration status.

Some UK banks ask for proof of address although this is not required by law to open a bank account and the Government is working with them to encourage them to relax this requirement.

Do I need to provide food and is there any support available?

You do not have to provide food but you can if you wish.

Food banks may be able to help provide food and other essential items. Visit Trussell Trust to find a local food bank: www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-a-foodbank/

Can my guest register with a GP?

Yes. Ukrainian nationals can receive emergency treatment from a GP surgery for 14 days. After that, they will need to register with a GP at www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/gps

How can I get children into school?

Ukrainian nationals can apply for a school place for a child as soon as they arrive. The school admissions process is the same for all children.

A parent can apply for a school place for their child, or the sponsor can complete the application on the parent's behalf.

The application will be considered under Essex's school admission arrangements, as all applications are. The outcome will depend on the number of places available at local schools.

Application forms, admissions information and more about Essex schools are on our website: www.essex.gov.uk/admissions

For advice and guidance, telephone School Admissions on 0345 603 2200.

How can I help my guest with mental health and emotional wellbeing?

Support for children and young people

Children and young people can get advice and support from the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health service.

The service can help with things like low mood, anxiety, sleep problems, trauma and loss. The service may help directly or point towards more appropriate support.

Any child, young person, parent or professional can contact the service.

Telephone: 0800 953 0222 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday) or 0800 995 1000 (outside of these hours)

Email: SET-CAMHS.referrals@nelft.nhs.uk

Support for adults

Adults can get advice and support from our Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing team.

This service helps people who are experiencing mental health concerns like anxiety and depression. They provide practical advice on how to access appropriate local services.

If a mental health need is more severe, they will advise on the best next steps to ensure you get help as soon as possible.

Telephone: 0333 032 2958 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Email: MH.wellbeingteam@essex.gov.uk

Outside of these hours, call 111 and select option 2 for mental health crisis support.

Mental health organisations

These local and national organisations also offer confidential advice, guidance and support to people struggling with their mental health.

Inspire

Telephone: 028 9032 8474

Email: hello@inspirewellbeing.org

Mind

Telephone: 0300 123 3393

Email: info@mind.org.uk

Website: www.mind.org.uk

NHS

Telephone: 111

Website: www.nhs.uk/mental-health

Peabody South East

Telephone: 0800 288 8883

Website: www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/peabody-south-east-essex-outreach-support-service

Samaritans

Telephone: 116 123

Website: www.samaritans.org

How can my guest get community support, including translations and befriending?

The Essex Wellbeing Service (EWS) can help your guest connect with support services and local communities.

The EWS offers a translation service that could help you and your guest communicate.

They also have a befriending service which can help your guest meet people and make friends.

The EWS can also help with emotional wellbeing, mental health and physical health.

Telephone: 0300 303 9988 (8am to 7pm, Monday to Friday; 10am to 2pm Saturday)