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# Homes for Ukraine: welcome guide for Ukrainian children under 18

This is an introductory welcome guide for children under 18 who are moving from Ukraine to England under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.


From: [Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities](#)

Published 2 August 2022

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## Welcome

This guide is for you if you are under 18 and moving from Ukraine to England under the Homes for Ukraine scheme. It will be most helpful to those of you who are not travelling with or to join a parent or legal guardian.

We understand that your decision to leave your home will have been difficult, and that you may be anxious about living in a new country. This guide is a starting point; it gives you the information you need about arriving and living in the UK, including where you can go for help if you have any problems.

## Before you arrive in the UK

Before you come to the UK your parent(s) or legal guardian will need to provide parental consent documents including a form for the local council in England (the local government authority where your sponsor lives) with information about your living arrangements when you get here. This will include information about who will be responsible for looking after you. This will either be a relative of your sponsor (usually a friend of your parents). Before you travel, someone from the local council should contact you and your family and talk to you about what to expect. Your sponsor will also be able to help you with any questions or

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[Homes for Ukraine: Guidance for parents or legal guardians \(children and minors applying without parents\)](#)

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concerns you may have, and they should support you as you settle into life in England.

It is also a good idea for you and your family to stay in touch by email, telephone, and to video call your sponsor before you arrive.

## **Travel arrangements**

Before you travel, you and your parent(s) or legal guardian will make a travel plan with your sponsor. It is important that you have a copy of this travel plan. Wherever possible, you should travel with your sponsor or a family member, and by aeroplane. If your sponsor cannot travel with you, you will need to know where they are waiting for you and how to contact them. During your journey, you should stay in touch with your parents and sponsor (if they cannot go with you) and keep them updated if there are any delays.

If you need any help on the journey, you can contact any airline staff member or other member of staff at the airport. On arrival in the UK, Border Officials at the desk where you show your passport will ensure you have proper arrangements in place to travel to your sponsor's home.

## **What you should know in your first few days on arrival**

Shortly after you arrive at your sponsor's home (usually within 24 hours), you will be visited by someone from the local council where you and your sponsor live. This is nothing to worry about. Councils have a duty to help protect children and they will visit you and your sponsor regularly to support you both.

At the first meeting you can expect them to:

- check that you are happy with your new living arrangements and are receiving the immediate support you need;
- speak to you, any relative who has come with you, and your sponsor separately as well as together; and;
- make sure you know how to raise any concerns you have.

Your sponsor will understand that moving to a new country without your parents is not easy and that you might feel anxious and unsettled to start with. It's a good idea to talk to your sponsor, and any relatives that might be with you, about how you are feeling.

During your first few days and weeks your sponsor should:

- Show you around your local area.
- Help you to stay in touch with friends and family over the phone and online.
- Ensure you have all the essentials you need – like toiletries and clothes.
- Help you apply for your Biometric Residence Permit (this is a card with your immigration status on it which you can use as proof of your right to study and claim any benefits you are eligible for).
- Arrange for you to go to school or college.
- Register you with a doctor and help you find a dentist.
- Register you with the Embassy of Ukraine to the UK.

It is also important to take some time to settle into your new home following your journey and get to know your sponsor, and you should also contact your family to let them know you have arrived.

## Your welfare

Either your sponsor or an adult relative will be responsible for looking after you. This includes:

- Keeping you safe, secure, and protected, including providing food, clothing, and anything else you need.
- Making sure you have a comfortable place to live, including your own bedroom or, if appropriate, a bedroom that you share with your brother or sister.
- Supporting you with your education and training – including staying in touch with your teachers and your parents about your progress and providing the things you need for school or college, for example, your textbooks and school uniform.

- Looking after you when you are unwell and making sure you can access advice or treatment when you need it.
- Helping you to stay in touch with your family and friends in Ukraine including phone and internet access when you want to speak to your family and friends.
- Finding opportunities for you to enjoy Ukrainian culture and keep language links to Ukraine.

There are also a number of other resources to support you on your arrival from Ukraine; this includes guides to explain the education system, to help you learn English and support your mental health and wellbeing.

## How to access health care services

Healthcare in the UK is provided by the NHS (National Healthcare Service). In the UK you do not have to pay to see a doctor or pay for prescriptions. The services listed below are all free of charge.

### Healthcare services - useful phone numbers

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Contact your: **Make an appointment to speak to your GP for any health issues** or if you need to get specialist treatment for a long-term health condition or disability. Your sponsor will register you with a GP.

General Practitioner (GP). This is a doctor based in the local community.

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Telephone: **Use this service if you need medical advice but cannot wait until you next see your GP.** You can speak to someone to discuss your symptoms and get general health advice and information. You can also get health information and advice at [111.nhs.uk](https://111.nhs.uk)

111 (say 'interpreter please' in Ukrainian or Russian for

translation  
services)

Website:  
111.nhs.uk

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Telephone:      **Phone this number in a medical emergency**  
999 or 112      if you have a serious accident or sudden  
                         serious illness you should phone this number  
                         and ask for an ambulance to take you to  
                         hospital.

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## School and education

In England you must be in education or training until your 18th birthday. Most young people continue until the end of the academic year in which they turn 18.

Your sponsor will arrange for you to go to school or college unless your parents and sponsor decide for you to be educated at home.

Your teachers at school will understand English is not your first language and they will make sure you get the help you need in order to get the most out of your lessons and achieve your potential. This will be the same if you choose to attend college, but in addition if you would benefit you may be able to access English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses.

### The English education system

**Primary school** - This is for children from the ages for 4 to 11

**Secondary school** - Most secondary schools teach children from the ages of 11 to 16. Some secondary schools teach children from the ages of 11 to 18.

**Sixth form and further education colleges** - These teach young people aged 16 to 18.

### Length of sponsorship agreement and ending

## **sponsorship**

Your sponsor has agreed to sponsor you for 3 years or until you turn 18 and they have sponsored you for at least 6 months.

Before you come to the UK, your parents or legal guardian and your sponsor should discuss arrangements for you after you turn 18. Your sponsor might be able to host you for longer, or they should support you to find independent accommodation when you turn 18.

Your sponsor has agreed to look after you for 3 years or until you turn 18 and they have sponsored you for at least 6 months. This is so you can feel settled living in the UK. We expect that you will want to be reunited with your family, and to return to Ukraine, when it is safe to do so. Your parent or legal guardian can choose to end the arrangement with your sponsor in the UK at any time before the full 3 years have passed. This might be because they want you to return to Ukraine or to another country to be reunited with them.

There is [further guidance for your parents or legal guardian available](#). This includes information about how they can come and stay with you in the UK.

## **Work and benefits**

There are laws in the UK which restrict the type and amount of work that you can do when you are under 18. There are different rules for term time and school holidays. You should never be expected to work for free for anyone. There is more information, including about pay and the national minimum wage for 16 and 17 year olds, available here: [Child employment](#).

In exceptional circumstances, 16- and 17-year-olds can access state benefits, known as Universal Credit, in their own right. Your sponsor can help you make a claim, your local council should also be able to offer some advice. There is more information available here: [Universal Credit: Eligibility](#)

There is lots of useful information and work and benefits when you turn 18 in the [Ukraine welcome guide](#)

## Where to go for help

The UK takes the welfare of all children very seriously and this section includes information about who you can ask for help if something is worrying you.

**If someone has hurt you, or you are afraid that they might, you should call the Police on 999 or 112.**

There are lots of other people who you can ask for help as well. Until you are 18, someone from the local council will visit you regularly to check how things are going.

This person will give you their contact details so that you can contact them during working hours. These visits will include time for you to speak to the local council worker on your own so that you can ask any questions or talk about anything that is worrying you.

If anything is worrying you or you feel unsafe at any point you should speak to your sponsor, the person from the local council who visits you regularly or a teacher at your school or college. You can also ask these people for help:

- You can talk to your teachers at school or college.
- Healthcare workers like your GP or someone at hospital.
- The telephone helpline run by the children's charity Barnardo's, which has a free number to call: 0800 148 8586. The helpline offers a confidential service and has Ukrainian and Russian speakers. [Visit Barnardo's website.](#)
- The telephone helpline run by the Children's Commissioner, which has a free number to call: 0800 528 0731. They can offer support and advice if you feel unsafe or you are worried about your future. [Visit the Children's Commissioner website.](#)
- The Ukrainian Embassy's consular section: [consul\\_gb@mfa.gov.ua](mailto:consul_gb@mfa.gov.ua). The consular phone number (for safeguarding emergencies) is +44 7553 483 628. See [information on types of help that can be provided by the Consulate.](#)

## Who to speak to if you have concerns about living with your



## **sponsor**

You can also contact any of the people above, without your sponsor knowing, if you have any concerns about living with your sponsor. If it is not safe for you to live with your sponsor the council will ensure that you have somewhere else safe and suitable to stay. Your parent or legal guardian will also be contacted for their views and wishes.

If you are at risk of serious harm, the council may decide it is best that they will take you into their care and be responsible for your ongoing welfare in either the short or longer term. The council will contact your parents and the Ukrainian Embassy if they decide this is necessary. Depending on your age and wishes you may be provided with somewhere to live independently, go and live with a foster carer in their family home (which is similar to the sponsorship arrangement) or possibly be given a place in a children's home where you will live with other children and there are staff to take care of you. You would still be able to keep contact with your family and friends back in Ukraine in all circumstances.

Published 2 August 2022

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