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Guidance

Sponsors of children travelling to, or staying in the UK without their parent or legal guardian: Homes for Ukraine

What to do if you are asked to look after your guest's child or children unexpectedly. This could include if your guest needs to leave the country, or travel separately.

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

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Children under 18 who are coming to the UK to live without their parents or legal guardians could be particularly vulnerable. There is a separate process for applications from sponsors to make sure that children and young people are safe. Applicants must meet different eligibility criteria, and their sponsors must also have enhanced safeguarding checks. You can apply to sponsor a child without their parent or legal guardian. You will need to use the online application form for [sponsors of children not travelling with their parent or guardian](#).

Parents or legal guardians who have applied to come to the UK with their children through the main Homes for Ukraine scheme must travel with their child to the UK.

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Once in the UK, guests should not leave their child in the care of a sponsor (or an accompanying adult relative) for a period of 28 days or more. Guests should also not leave their child in the care of a sponsor (or an accompanying relative) for shorter periods on a regular basis.

As a sponsor of adults and children (where guests have arrived together as a family) you may not have expected to take care of, or be responsible for, their children, and you will not have had the necessary safeguarding checks.

In very exceptional circumstances when parents or legal guardians can't travel with their child to the UK, or need to leave their child in the care of the sponsor for 28 days or more, they must take certain steps. Before parents leave their child they must have:

- agreed how long you (the sponsor) will be responsible for the child or children
- your consent to take on additional responsibility of a child under 18 who is not with their parent or legal guardian. The council will send you a form which explains the additional responsibilities
- waited for the council to successfully complete any additional safeguarding checks needed (including a sponsor suitability assessment, relevant DBS checks and accommodation checks) before the child travels to the UK or before the parent or legal guardian leaves their child in the care of the sponsor

Parents or legal guardians should follow the steps above in any circumstance where they intend to leave their child in your care for 28 days or more (or for shorter periods on a regular basis), including if they can't travel with their child to the UK, if they are returning to Ukraine temporarily, or if they are moving to another UK address for work.

If the parent or legal guardian hasn't taken these steps and the child is in your care without the parent or legal guardian, you must tell your local council immediately.

While away from the UK, the parents or legal guardians should stay in frequent contact with you and their child and update you if there are any changes to their plans (for example if the duration of their time away changes).

Sponsors should be aware that if a sponsorship arrangement between a sponsor and a child who is under 18 and not with their parent or legal guardian breaks down or is ended at the direction of the council for child welfare or safeguarding reasons, the council may need to accommodate the child.

The council will try to contact the parent to find out how they want their child to be cared for if this happens.

You can read more about the [eligible minors scheme](#).

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