



Advice NI Information Briefing Support for Ukrainians

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Advice NI Information Briefing

Support for Ukrainians arriving in Northern Ireland

In light of an expected increase in queries in this area and the swiftly developing policy environment, we present below a number of links to useful information sources covering the help available to those fleeing the war in Ukraine.

nidirect is the primary source of official information for residents of Northern Ireland, and [key information](#) is available there for Ukrainians entering Northern Ireland, as well as those looking to help. The UK government has also set up a page covering [its response](#), which is a useful way to check for further changes.

If you have any suggestions for other useful information, please contact the Advice NI Information Officer, Matt Cole, [by email](#).

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Immigration

You must exercise caution before offering any advice on immigration matters. Immigration advice is closely regulated by the [Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner](#) (OISC), and only those with relevant accreditation can advise someone on an application for immigration status. If you are in any doubt about your accreditation, you should signpost the client to an appropriately qualified immigration adviser.

The OISC defines immigration advice as giving an opinion on a course of action, or laying out options, specific to an individual client, while providing an immigration service means taking action on the client's behalf with the immigration authorities. If you do either of these things, both the organisation and the individual adviser must be properly accredited. However, it is permitted to provide access to information about immigration matters without accreditation, so long as the information is general and does not give an opinion about how client(s) should proceed.

Advice Services

| Resource | Publisher | Content |
|---|---|---|
| Immigration & Asylum | Law Centre NI | Contact details for immigration advice line. |
| Help Ukraine | Migrant Centre NI | Includes a list of immigration advisers and contact information, mostly local services. |
| Free UK immigration advice for people fleeing Ukraine | Ukraine Advice Project UK | Details of group of volunteer legal professionals offering free advice to Ukrainian nationals. |
| Ukraine – Pro Bono Advice | The Law Society of Northern Ireland | List of accredited firms and legal service providers that have confirmed they are in a position to offer pro-bono advice and assistance in relation to Immigration and Asylum work relevant to the ongoing crisis in Ukraine. |



General advice

| Resource | Publisher | Content |
|---|--|---|
| Guidance for advisers: Ukrainians seeking to enter or remain in the UK | OISC | Advice and guidance to organisations about what work they may undertake at OISC Level 1, related to Ukrainians seeking to enter or remain in the UK. |
| Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules | House of Commons | Official summary of changes to the Immigration Rules, formalising the concessions introduced for those fleeing the war in Ukraine. |
| The UK Stands with Ukraine: Fact sheet | Gov.uk | Information on obtaining permission to enter the UK from Ukraine. |
| Factsheet: Home Office visa support for Ukrainians | Home Office in the media | Public guidance on Home Office policies relating to visa access for Ukrainian nationals and information on visa processes. |
| Ukraine: UK immigration concessions | The House of Commons Library | Information for MPs on immigration concessions for people affected by the crisis in Ukraine and campaigns for further measures to help a wider range of people in Ukraine. |
| Can Ukrainians take refuge in the UK? | Free Movement | Independent guidance on concessions and visa options available to Ukrainian nationals seeking entry to or already present in the UK. |
| Legal issues for Ukrainians arriving in the United Kingdom from Ireland | Free Movement | Independent guidance on access to the UK from the Republic of Ireland for Ukrainian nationals due to their status as “visa nationals”. |
| Visa Concessions for Ukrainians | Immigration Advice Service | Independent information on temporary concessions for Ukrainians in the UK and new measures to help Ukrainian residents with and without family ties family ties to migrate to the UK. |
| Solidarity with Ukraine | Work Rights Centre | Information on the different routes for getting out of Ukraine and to the UK. |



Visas

| Resource | Publisher | Content |
|--|---------------|---|
| Applying for a visa to come to the UK | Gov.uk | Official public information on visa options and procedures for entering the UK |
| UK visa support for Ukrainian nationals | Gov.uk | Official UKVI guidance on visa options for Ukrainian nationals and their family members seeking entry to the UK. |
| Ukrainian nationals on family routes: concession to the Immigration Rules | Gov.uk | Official UKVI guidance on temporary concessions for Ukrainian nationals applying to join a family route. |
| Ukrainian nationals in the UK: visa support | Gov.uk | Official UKVI guidance on visa options for Ukrainians already in the UK. |
| Ukrainian nationals on work and study routes: concessions to the Immigration Rules | Gov.uk | Official UKVI guidance on temporary concessions for Ukrainian nationals already in the UK on work and study routes. |
| Visa options for people fleeing Ukraine | Law Centre NI | Guidance on visa options available to Ukrainian nationals seeking entry to or already present in the UK. |



Ukraine Family Scheme

| Resource | Publisher | Content |
|--|-------------------------|---|
| Apply for a Ukraine Family Scheme visa | Gov.uk | Official UKVI guidance for family members of British nationals, UK settled persons and certain others to come to or stay in the UK under the Ukraine Family Scheme. |
| Ukraine Scheme: caseworker guidance | Home Office (gov.uk) | Official guidance for caseworkers on how to decide applications for entry clearance or permission to stay on the Ukraine Scheme. |
| Ukraine Family Scheme – Frequently Asked Questions | Settled | Referenced advice from an independent charity on the operation of the Ukraine Family Scheme. |

Homes for Ukraine

| Resource | Publisher | Content |
|--|--|--|
| Homes for Ukraine | Gov.uk | Official information on the scheme allowing individuals, charities, community groups and businesses to volunteer accommodation and provide a route to safety for those forced to escape Ukraine. |
| Homes for Ukraine scheme: frequently asked questions | Gov.uk | Questions and answers from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on how the Homes for Ukraine scheme will work. |
| Homes for Ukraine connecting refugees with sponsors across the UK | Reset Communities and Refugees | Secondary registration portal for Ukrainians and potential sponsors. |
| ‘Homes for Ukraine’ scheme launches | Gov.uk | Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities press release announcing the scheme. |
| Government launches ‘Homes for Ukraine’ scheme, with recipients of help to have full and unrestricted access to benefits and other support | rightsnet | Independent summary of the scheme announcement and guidance. |



Asylum

| Resource | Publisher | Content |
|--|--|--|
| Claim asylum in the UK | Gov.uk | Official public information on applying for asylum to stay in the UK as a refugee. |
| Ukraine: country policy and information notes | Gov.uk | This publication was withdrawn on 24 February 2022, which suggests that new guidance is being prepared. Guidance used by UKVI to make decisions in asylum and human rights applications. |
| UNHCR Position on Returns to Ukraine | UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency | Official call on states to suspend forcible return of nationals and former habitual residents of Ukraine, including those who have had their asylum claims rejected. |
| UNHCR Ukraine - Help for refugees and asylum-seekers | UNHCR | Collection of links providing guidance on accessing help and support with asylum or resettlement either in Ukraine or as a displaced person. |
| Ukraine crisis 2022: Aid and refugees | House of Commons Library | Research briefing describing the potential effect of the conflict in Ukraine and the number of refugees leaving the country, alongside what aid the UK and others have pledged in 2022. |
| What is the difference between refugee status and humanitarian protection? | Free Movement | Summary of the two main types of legal status for refugees in the UK. |
| What is Asylum? | The Right to Remain Toolkit | Independent summary of procedures for claiming asylum in the UK. |
| Our helplines | The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) | Contact details for the Irregular Migrants Helpline, for those in the UK without status. |



Financial Assistance

Advice NI members and services can provide support in these areas. A full list of members is available from the [Local Advice](#) section of the Advice NI website, and members of the public can call 0800 915 4604 or email advice@adviceni.net to receive advice on matters relating to access to benefits.

Access to public funds

| Resource | Publisher | Content |
|--|--|---|
| Public funds | Gov.uk | Immigration staff guidance on public funds foreign nationals can claim. |
| Accessing UK benefits and services if you're subject to immigration control (AdviserNet) | Citizens Advice | Independent information and guidance on accessing benefits and services when subject to immigration control. |
| What is the no recourse to public funds condition? | Free Movement | Independent legal guidance on the condition preventing certain immigrants from accessing public funds. |
| Benefits and housing (public funds) | The No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) Network | Local council-focused information on accessing benefits and housing when subject to immigration control. |
| Update on Children with No Recourse to Public Funds | UK Parliament | Official announcement of extension of access to free-school meals for children of families with no recourse to public funds. |
| UK boosts support for Ukrainian research community | Gov.uk | Ukrainian nationals involved in academic research will benefit from a £3 million UK government package of support to continue their vital work in the UK. |



Benefits

| Resource | Publisher | Content |
|--|---------------------------|---|
| Immediate benefit support for those fleeing the invasion in Ukraine | Gov.uk | Department for Work and Pensions press release on the emergency regulations allowing those arriving in the UK from Ukraine as a result of the Russian invasion to access benefits subject to the habitual residence and past presence tests. |
| Social Security (Habitual Residence and Past Presence) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 | Legislation.gov.uk | Emergency regulations for Northern Ireland, in line with those announced in the above press release. (No equivalent announcement from the Executive or the relevant Departments, but an explanatory memorandum is available.) |
| Exemption from habitual residence and past presence tests for specified benefits for people arriving in Northern Ireland from Ukraine | rightsnet | Independent summary of the emergency regulations above. |
| Amendment of child benefit residence conditions and tax credit income rules to support people arriving in the UK from Ukraine and their sponsors | rightsnet | Independent summary of the new regulations giving access to Child Benefit for arriving in the UK, and disregarding payments under the Homes for Ukraine scheme for calculation of entitlement to Tax Credits. |



Housing

| Resource | Publisher | Content |
|--|--------------------|---|
| Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 | Legislation.gov.uk | New legislation conferring eligibility for housing and homelessness assistance for people who have left Ukraine as a result of the Russian invasion (legislation applies directly to Northern Ireland). |
| Eligibility for housing and homelessness assistance for people who leave Ukraine as a result of the Russian invasion | rightsnet | Independent summary of the new regulations. |



Supporting services

There is now a [welcome page](#) at nidirect providing information about support available to Ukrainians arriving in Northern Ireland.

| Resource | Publisher | Content |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| Ukraine assistance centres | nidirect | Details about the Ukraine assistance centres set up to provide advice on key services, including health assessments, education, jobs, benefits, housing and immigration. |
| Help for Ukrainian nationals | British Red Cross | Range of information and signposts to supporting services for those fleeing Ukraine, including translated information. |

Accommodation

| Resource | Publisher | Content |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Refugees Welcome | Refugees Welcome | Website matching accommodation offers to refugees needing a home. |
| Drop-in Centre | Homeplus NI | Details of drop-in centre based in Belfast for refugees, asylum seekers and destitute migrants. |

Travel

| Resource | Publisher | Content |
|---|---|--|
| Mallon announces free public transport for Ukrainian refugees | Department for Infrastructure | Official announcement of temporary travel scheme providing free public transport for Ukrainian refugees from their port of entry to their final destination. |
| Ukrainian Displaced Persons Travel Scheme | National Rail Enquiries | Brief confirmation of access to free onward travel in the UK for Ukrainian nationals. |
| Travel News | Eurostar | Includes news item on access to free travel to St. Pancras from any Eurostar station in Europe. |



Essentials

| Resource | Publisher | Content |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Get Help | Trussell Trust | Guidance on how to obtain support from the Trussell Trust's food bank network. |





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