

Update for those supporting refugees from Ukraine – 14 April 2022

Dear hosts, volunteer coordinators and parish council colleagues,

If this is the first time you are receiving this weekly 'Support for Ukraine community update' from us as a host, please note that we send these out on a regular basis both to hosts in South Cambridgeshire, and to District Councillors, community coordinators and parish council colleagues. The idea is to share all the latest updates that we have on support for the Homes for Ukraine scheme. All information previously shared can be found on our [Support for Ukraine webpages](#). Hosts also receive information from us directly related to DBS checks, accommodation checks, £350 (host) and £200 (guest) payments – hosts should already have received this welcome email from us.

For any questions not covered in this e-newsletter or on our Support for Ukraine webpages, please email duty.communities@scambs.gov.uk

Virtual get together for hosts and community coordinators

We are planning to host a webinar in the near future to enable hosts, community coordinators and council colleagues to talk about the current scheme, share learnings and best practice, and answer any queries that people still have. Before we book this in, we want to hear from you about what topics you would like to be covered. We can then ensure the right mix of colleagues from local authorities will be available to attend. [Please email us to let us know what topics you would like to be discussed](#). Feedback by Wednesday 20 April would be much appreciated.

Safeguarding new arrivals

It is important to remember that people arriving from Ukraine may have been traumatised by the war and having to leave loved ones behind. Some may need support to process what has happened from mental health practitioners.

There will be many ways in which hosts and community groups can support new arrivals in the coming weeks and months, but one thing everyone can do immediately is to help ensure no guests are subjected to risk of trafficking, modern slavery or exploitation on their arrival in the UK.

In addition to looking out for new arrivals, communities could display / share some of the tools that will help people to understand what modern slavery looks like, and who to contact if they are at risk. The following were developed by the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority: a [workers' checklist poster](#), a [know the signs poster](#) and a [workers' rights leaflet](#) (in multiple languages).

Facebook groups

We are in the process of setting up some closed Facebook groups, specifically for guests and hosts. The idea is to provide an online community space only for guests and hosts, to bring people together using a platform that people are already familiar with. We will provide you with further details and links when these groups are established, so hosts and guests can join if desired.

Updates on support for guests

[All previous information shared is available on our 'I am a guest from Ukraine' webpage.](#)

Emotional support

The [British Red Cross can support arrivals from Ukraine](#) with help in more than 200 languages. It helps people who are lonely, worried and finding it hard to get the help they need in the UK. Guests can call them on **0808 196 3651** (open daily 10am - 6pm) and ask for an interpreter if they need one. If guests are feeling very distressed, they can call The Samaritans on **116 123** or email jo@samaritans.org.

More information from the British Red Cross can be accessed, in Ukrainian, using the following links: on [coping with trauma \(adults\)](#) and [coping with personal crisis](#). A PDF is attached with information, in Ukrainian, on coping with trauma (children).

Education

As you will be aware, Cambridgeshire County Council is responsible for education in Cambridgeshire. The County Council has now published information about how arrivals should apply for school places. Please [visit the Cambridgeshire County Council website for information on how families arriving from Ukraine, with school age children, can apply for a school place](#).

Benefits

The Government has updated guidance on access to [Child Benefit](#) – guests are eligible immediately (rather than having to wait for the usual three-month qualifying period). People who wish to claim should complete a [CH2 Child Benefit claim form](#) and submit this by post to the Child Benefit office. The address is included on the form. You will need to provide an original birth certificate and the passport or travel document used to enter the UK. Where this documentation is not immediately available, people are advised to include a note in their claim and someone from HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) will be in touch to discuss further. Anyone wanting more information on Child Benefit can visit GOV.UK or call 0300 200 3100 (from inside the UK).

Updates for hosts

[All previous information shared is available on our 'Information for Homes for Ukraine hosts' webpage](#).

Key processes - when we will contact you

We are contacting hosts directly within a couple of days of being given your contact information by the Home Office. We are only provided with host contact information once hosts have been successfully 'matched' with guests. We are receiving updated information regularly from the Home Office, sometimes daily, and we will email each new cohort of matched hosts with information about next steps.

When you receive this information from us, please do not share it with anyone else. We need hosts to provide us with information at the right time to make our process as efficient as possible.

This initial welcome email to you will provide you with information to start the process of getting a Disclosure and Barring Service check for every eligible member of your household. We will also be able to start organising your accommodation check. These can both happen before your guests arrive (although in some instances guests may arrive before they are complete - this is OK).

We will then need you to notify us once your guests have arrived. This is because we cannot make host payments (£350 per household per month in arrears) or guest payments (£200 per guest ASAP after arrival) until guests have arrived at your address.

Information about how to notify us about all of the above will be sent to hosts direct by email.

Intercultural awareness

It is worth remembering that people have different cultural norms, and sharing your home with people who may not have the same cultural norms will not only provide lovely opportunities to learn about another culture, but also some possible challenges.

Some things you may want to bear in mind are that people may have different diets (some preferred items may be found in Polish shops locally), may be used to drinking bottled water, may not be comfortable with 'small talk' such as about the weather, may not be used to saying 'please' and 'thank you' as much as some in the UK will, will not know about local recycling conventions and so on.

We suggest asking your guests (while being mindful that people may have recently experienced significant trauma and, even if not, may not be comfortable being too open with a stranger) whether there is anything they need, and regularly checking back in with them about their comfort and needs. **There is further information in a document provided by 'Health Prom' attached.**

Will my Council Tax be affected?

The [Government has announced](#) that a Ukrainian joining a sponsor's home under the Homes for Ukraine scheme will be 'disregarded' when Council Tax discounts are calculated to ensure sponsors are not financially worse off as a result of taking part in the scheme. As well as there being no impact on a sponsor's discount for their main home, there will be a 50% discount for empty or second homes that are used to house Ukrainians on the scheme. Council tax discounts will not be affected if you sponsor and host a Ukrainian household in your home.

If I receive care and sponsor a refugee through the Homes for Ukraine, will I be affected?

The [Department of Health and Social Care has published guidance](#) for councils on charges relating to care recipients who sponsor refugees under the Homes for Ukraine scheme. It outlines that sponsors should be considered to be volunteers engaged in a voluntary activity as a host, when carrying out financial assessments in relation to adult social care.

Gareth

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