



The
Executive Office
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Welcome

**Guide for Ukrainians
in Northern Ireland**

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Welcome

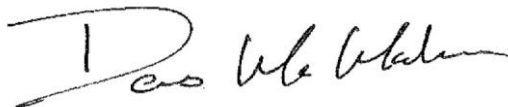
You are very welcome. *Laskavo prosymo.*

Northern Ireland has a history of providing sanctuary to those fleeing persecution and we are thankful that you have arrived safely here with us.

We want to help you transition to life here and this guide aims to provide information on all the various types of support available to you, including housing, employment and access to education. Importantly, it also contains an emergency section and information on keeping safe and where you can get help if you need it.

More detailed advice about specific services in your local area will be made available to you through our Assistance Centres and local partners.

The circumstances that brought you here are among the worst imaginable. Our aim is to do our best for you as you rebuild and recover.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Denis McMahon', written in a cursive style.

Denis McMahon

Permanent Secretary

The Executive Office

Introduction

Firstly, we know that you have experienced terrible circumstances and that you will face many challenges while you are transitioning to life in Northern Ireland. This guide is intended to help support you as you resettle here. It should be used in conjunction with the information on nidirect, which you can find here: [Ukraine crisis | nidirect](#).

nidirect

This is the official Government website for Northern Ireland residents, providing a single point of access to public sector information and services. **The information on NI Direct can be translated into different languages. To translate the pages, click on the orange banner at the top of the website page and then select the language you wish to translate into.**

It is important for you to know that you are not alone and there will be support to answer questions or provide additional information should you need it. You may find the following useful:

- You'll find lots of useful information about Northern Ireland here: [About Northern Ireland | nidirect](#)
- A series of Frequently Asked Questions is published online and is regularly updated: [Homes for Ukraine Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- If you need to speak to someone you can call the 'Make the Call' Team on **0800 232 1271** and advisors will do their best to assist you. Make the Call is a service provided by the Department for Communities; and
- **Annex A** contains a list of important numbers and links.

How to translate websites

Within this guide there are a number of links to websites. Most of these websites have the facility to translate into a different language. There are several ways to do this.

- If there is an orange banner at the top of the page with the words 'Translate this website', click on this and then scroll down to select your language.
- If there is an orange circle with a picture of a white stick person on the page, click on this. A black banner will then open at the top of the page. Click on the white square which has a black letter 'A' and scroll down to select your language.
- Some websites have a box at the top of the page which you can use to directly scroll to the language of your choice.

Section 1: What to Expect When You Arrive

If you are being sponsored under the Homes for Ukraine or joining a family member under the Ukraine Family Scheme we will refer to the person you are staying with as your host.

Pre-Arrival

You should ensure that you have a visa to enter the United Kingdom (UK) before you travel, as Northern Ireland is part of the UK.

By the time you are due to travel, you and your host should have each other's contact details and we would encourage you to make contact with each other. This will support initial introductions, as you will probably not know each other very well and there will understandably be some nervousness from both parties. It will also enable you to share information about your travel plans with your host.

You should ensure that you have the full postal address of the accommodation where you will be staying and you should discuss the arrangements for getting there with your host. Your host may agree to meet you when you arrive or may arrange for a family member or friend to meet you. However, if this is not possible, they should provide you some advice about how to get to your accommodation (see *Transport to Your Accommodation* section below).

Children travelling without their parent/legal guardian

The Homes For Ukraine scheme is now also open to children under 18 who are not travelling with or joining their parent or legal guardian, known as 'eligible children' (where sponsor eligibility and parental or legal guardian consent requirements are met). Safeguarding checks on sponsors must be completed prior to new visa applications from eligible children. On 28 July 2022, a new [online application form](#) for planned sponsors to complete was launched. This enables planned sponsors to start

their application process and begin safeguarding checks. The visa application process for new applications from eligible children opened on 10 August 2022.

Further guidance is available on Gov.UK via the following links:

- [Guidance for Parents or Legal Guardians](#)
- [Guidance for sponsors](#)

Applicants can apply from Ukraine or from any other third country.

Arrival

Northern Ireland is part of the UK. It shares a land border with the Republic of Ireland. You may arrive directly into Northern Ireland, or you may arrive in the Republic of Ireland and travel up over the land border into Northern Ireland. There are 5 main entry points for planes and boats arriving directly into Northern Ireland: Belfast International Airport, George Best Airport (Belfast City Airport); City of Derry Airport; Port of Belfast; and Port of Larne.

At each of these entry points there will be an information banner, which may provide a suitable designated place for you to meet your host if they have agreed to meet you when you arrive. If that's not possible, or your host is unexpectedly delayed, you can also go to General Information/Customer Services at the port or airport to speak to someone. Alternatively, you can ring the 'Make the Call' helpline on **0800 232 1271**.

If you have a working bank card or cash card, you will be able to use them in the Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) at your point of entry.

Entry via the Republic of Ireland

You can also arrive through airports and ports in the Republic of Ireland and travel overland to Northern Ireland. To do this you should have your Visa in place, as this is the permission that you need to enter the UK.

Transport to Your Accommodation

If your host is unable to meet you at your point of entry, you can get free public transport on buses and trains to your accommodation or another safe place of your choice. Please note that the offer of free transport is available only for your journey to your accommodation or other safe place. Once you have reached your initial destination you will need to pay for any further journeys you make on public transport.

For this free initial journey, you can get any bus or train service which has the Translink name. You cannot get a return journey. Translink is a state-owned transport company and buses and trains are available from any stop or station in Northern Ireland, including air and sea ports, to any place in Northern Ireland. If you arrived in the Republic of Ireland first, you can travel free to Northern Ireland from Dublin on Translink Ulsterbus services from the Bus Áras station or the Enterprise train service from Connolly Station.

You can plan your journey through the [Translink website](#), or you can telephone the Translink Contact Centre for advice on: **028 9066 6630**.

To get free public transport from Translink you will need to show:

- your Ukrainian passport or ID issued by the Ukrainian Government; and
- evidence of entry into the Republic of Ireland, such as an airline boarding card, ferry ticket or a booking email from an airline/ferry company, **dated within the previous 7 days**.

Travelling to Northern Ireland with Pets

We recognise that many people fleeing the conflict will not have been able to complete the full health preparations which are required for pets before they can enter the UK. The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has put in place special measures for people travelling from Ukraine to Northern Ireland with pets (cats, dogs and ferrets).

It is imperative that, if you are travelling to Northern Ireland with pets, that you contact DAERA Trade Imports either by email at: [**daeratradeimports@daera-ni.gov.uk**](mailto:daeratradeimports@daera-ni.gov.uk) or phone on: **0044 2890 524412** as soon as possible. They will provide quick approvals and relevant quarantine arrangements, for which they will cover the costs.

Find more information about travelling from Ukraine to the UK with pets here:

[nidirect: travelling from Ukraine with pets.](#)

Accommodation

Your host will be able to help you settle into life here. They will try to make sure you are comfortable in your accommodation and that you have access to basics such as food, bedding and toiletries.

Your host should ensure that your accommodation is safe and in a suitable condition to accommodate you. Two people should not share one room unless they are: adult cohabiting partners; a parent and child; two siblings of the same gender if aged over 10; two siblings regardless of gender if aged under 10. Individuals who didn't previously know each other should not be given the same room.

The accommodation should:

- be kept clean and in a reasonable state;
- have adequate kitchen and bathroom space;
- have access to drinking water;

- have a working smoke detector on each floor of the property and other fire safety precautions suitable for the building e.g. fire doors or escape routes as appropriate;
- have a working carbon monoxide detector in any room containing a solid fuel burning appliance (e.g. a coal fire, wood burning stove);
- have sufficient heating to keep the property at a comfortable temperature;
- have safe gas appliances, fittings and flues and have undertaken a Gas Safety check within the last year (see more information [here](#))
- have safe and working electrics;
- be almost entirely free of damp or mould;
- have doors and windows at entry level that lock properly; and
- be easy and safe to move around in, without excessively steep staircases that may cause harm.

Welfare checks

If you have arrived on the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, you will receive a home visit shortly after you arrive by someone from Extern or Barnardo's; these organisations are carrying out these visits on behalf of the government. This is nothing for you to be worried about, we just want to make sure that: you and your host are satisfied with the arrangements, you are in a safe environment and there are no welfare concerns. Please note that your visa is not linked to your host and if you do have any concerns about where you are living, you should raise these with Extern or Barnardo's, who will be able to support you.

Settling in

We understand that this will be a very difficult time for you as you have had to relocate here under such challenging circumstances. If you need time and space to reflect on your experience of leaving Ukraine in the first few days whilst you settle in, let your host know that you might need some quiet time to take in what has happened. Once you feel more settled, you might want to discuss basic house rules

with your host such as cooking and cleaning or preferences over things such as use of the bathroom or whether smoking in the house is acceptable.

You may, however, reach an agreement with your host about making a reasonable and proportionate contribution to household expenses, such as utilities consumed, or to any shared facilities.

You will not be asked to pay rent whilst you live in your host's property and there is no obligation for you to work, either within a host's home or at a business that they own in exchange for your accommodation.

Cash Support Payment

If you arrive in Northern Ireland through either the Homes for Ukraine Scheme or through the Ukraine Family Scheme, you and each member of your family that you have travelled with, is entitled to a £200 cash support payment to help cover any immediate costs. This is not counted as part of any other benefit payments which you may be able to claim and does not need to be re-paid.

You should apply for the payment online. To find out more details and how to claim your £200 payment, please see [this link](#).

If you need help or support to complete your application, you should email:

ukrainiancashsupport@brysoncharitablegroup.co.uk

Ukraine Assistance Centres

Ukraine Assistance Centres have been established to help you transition to life here and ensure you know how to access the support available, including benefits, health, housing, employment, education and free legal advice. Interpreters will be available and we would encourage you to attend one of the centres at your earliest convenience.

The Assistance Centres are located in towns across Northern Ireland. Please always check the nidirect website for the most up-to-date details on location and opening times: [Ukraine Assistance Centres](#)

Assistance Centres will also be able to advise you if you have no accommodation arranged.

Section 2: Visas, Biometric Residence Permits and International Travel

Homes for Ukraine and Ukraine Family Scheme

Depending on how and when you applied for a visa for the Homes for Ukraine Scheme or the Ukraine Family Scheme, you will have one of the following documents:

- A vignette which can be fixed into your passport;
- A 'Permission to Travel' letter issued by UK Visas and Immigration, which tells you that you are allowed to travel to the UK; or
- A 'Digital Status' letter issued by UK Visas and Immigration, which tells you that you have permission to travel, enter and remain in the UK for a period of time.

Immigration stamps: If you arrive through a UK port or airport

When you arrive at the UK international border, if you have:

- a standard 'Permission to Travel' letter, an Immigration Officer will stamp your passport with a six-month entry stamp; or
- a Vignette or a 'Digital Status' letter, you do not need to get your passport stamped as you **already** have permission to enter the UK.

Immigration stamps: If you arrive via a port or airport in the Republic of Ireland

You will have to cross an international border into Northern Ireland. This requires you to have a visa or for you to regulate your status with the Home Office in Belfast soon after arrival as there are no border checks between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

- If you have a Vignette or a 'Digital Status Permission to Travel' letter, you **do not** need to get your passport stamped;

- If you have a standard Permission to Travel letter you **will** need your passport stamped to give you leave to work, study and access services such as benefits;
- If you have **not** applied for a visa through one of the Ukraine Schemes you **will** need a stamp in your passport, giving you six months leave to work, study and access services such as benefits.

To be eligible for the passport stamp from the Home Office at Drumkeen House, you need to:

- be a Ukrainian person with a Ukrainian passport or ID card (with supporting paperwork)
- have arrived in the Republic of Ireland since 25 February 2022
- have a Republic of Ireland landing stamp

Passport stamps can be obtained from the Home Office at [Drumkeen House](#), 1 Drumkeen Complex, Upper Galwally, Belfast, BT8 6TB. This service operates solely on an information and appointment system.

If you believe you need a stamp, or you are unsure whether you need one, you should send a query email to the Home Office:

UKRDrumkeenSurgery@homeoffice.gov.uk and provide your name, date of birth and passport number.

If you do need a stamp: you will be given a day and appointment time to attend [Drumkeen](#) House.

If you don't need a stamp: you will be given an application reference number, the start and end date for your leave to remain in the UK, and contact details for UK Visas and Immigration to finalise your Biometric Residence Permit.

Please note you can avail of free legal advice about Visa applications through the Law Centre Northern Ireland on 02890 244401. The Law Centre is also in attendance at the Ukraine Assistance Centres.

Ukraine Extension Scheme

The Ukraine Extension Scheme will give Ukrainians who previously had permission to be in the UK (for example a visa) the opportunity to apply for three years' leave to remain in the UK with full access to work, study and public funds, alongside their family members. **Eligibility for the UES has changed.** Despite the name, it does not involve extending permission in the person's current visa route, but switching to a new one. For Seasonal Workers, this would mean no longer being tied to an employer or scheme operator — they could get a new job with whoever they like, without having to be sponsored.

Under the most recent eligibility criteria, Ukrainian Nationals who previously had permission to stay in the UK can apply for this scheme if one of the following is true:

- you held permission to be in the UK on or between 18 March 2022 and 16 May 2023 – the permission does not need to cover the whole period
- you previously held permission to be in the UK and that permission expired on or after 1 January 2022

Further information on eligibility and guidance can be obtained at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-to-stay-in-the-uk-under-the-ukraine-extension-scheme>

Application must be made online, is free, and will be subject to security checks however the decision process aims to progress applications as quickly as possible and applicants will be contacted directly once a decision has been made.

You should consider whether you want to keep your current visa or switch to the Ukraine Extension Scheme. This route does not currently lead to settlement – this

means that you may not be able to count any time you spend in the UK with this visa as part of an application for indefinite leave to remain in the UK in future.

Contact UK Visas and Immigration

If you need any assistance, contact UK Visas and Immigration.

Telephone: + 44 808 164 8810 – select option 1

Monday to Friday: 8am to 8pm

Saturday and Sunday: 9am to 5.30pm

Calls are free of charge

For further information and to apply visit: [Apply to the Ukraine Extension Scheme](#)

To access the helpline call: +44 (0)808 164 8810 (select option 1)

Biometric Residence Permit

If you have arrived in Northern Ireland under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme or the Ukraine Family Scheme, you may need to take additional steps to complete your visa process such as providing biometric information (fingerprints and photo).

Your initial visa gives you entitlement to live, work, study and access benefits in the UK for 6 months. To extend this entitlement to 3 years, you must apply for a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP). This permit provides evidence of your right to stay in the UK and allows you to confirm your identity.

To apply for a BRP you will need to provide biometric information. Biometric information is a photo of your face and your fingerprints.

If you provided your biometric information prior to travelling to the UK, your BRP application has been done and you will have received information about how to collect your BRP. These details will be contained in the paperwork you received prior to travelling.

If you didn't provide your biometric information before you travelled to the UK you must do so within 6 months of your arrival in the UK, so that you can be issued with a BRP.

There are two ways to apply for your BRP in the UK:

1. **In person:** [Apply online to book an appointment](#) to do your biometrics in person. Each member of the family will have to book an appointment using this same link. Your appointment takes place at a company called Sopra Steria in Regus Forsyth House in Belfast. Find directions here: [Regus Forsyth House](#). All members of the family must attend. Make sure you take all your identity documents e.g. passport, birth certificate, etc. Note that when you book your appointment you will initially be charged £135. Please proceed with the booking as the fee will be removed at the end.

If you use this method, your Biometric Residence Permit will be delivered to your home address. Notify [UK Visas & Immigration online](#) if you move address before you receive your BRP. A decision can take up to eight weeks for a standard application.

2. **Via the ID Check App** which allows you to use your phone to scan the biometric chip on your passport. See here: [ID Check App](#). You will need a UK Visas and Immigration account in order to use the ID Check App. The benefit of this approach is that you will not need to go to the Belfast office to be photographed and fingerprinted. This app is only available in English. If you use this method, you will be asked to pick up your Biometric Residence Permit from a Post Office.

If you do not have a Homes for Ukraine or Ukraine Family Scheme Visa, or you have not had a successful application to the [Ukraine Extension Scheme](#), you may not be eligible for a BRP. If you need legal advice about your status,

please contact the Law Centre NI on 02890 244401. The Law Centre NI is also in attendance at the Ukraine Assistance Centres.

It is important that you keep your BRP safe, as it is evidence of your legal status in the UK and shows how long you may stay in the UK. If you travel outside of the UK, you should make sure that you carry your BRP with you so that you are able to re-enter the UK.

More information on BRPs, including on what to do if it is lost or stolen can be found here: [Biometric Residence Permits](#).

Babies born in the UK

This guidance applies to any baby born in Northern Ireland to a parent who at the time of the baby's birth has a Ukraine Scheme visa i.e:

- Sponsorship (Homes for Ukraine)
- Family route
- Ukraine Extension Scheme

If the parent has any other type of visa, a different visa process for the baby might apply. If you need advice you can contact the Law Centre at: Tel: **02890 244401** or email: admin@lawcentreni.org, as they may be able to assist.

Babies born in the UK to Ukrainians who qualify under the Ukrainian Schemes are subject to immigration control and therefore **do** need to apply for a visa and obtain a BRP. The rules covering babies born in the UK can be found here: [Ukraine Extension Scheme](#).

Eligibility requirements: Babies born in UK

To be eligible for the Ukraine Extension Scheme an applicant must:

- be Ukrainian, or a non-Ukrainian who has or last had permission to be in the UK as a child of a Ukrainian:
- **provide a full birth certificate if applying as a child born in the UK**

Apply for a visa for a baby born in the UK

You should make your visa application for your baby as soon as you can but please note that you cannot apply until he/she has a full UK birth certificate. Babies born in Northern Ireland must be registered within 42 days of the birth. More detail can be found here: [nidirect: registering and naming your baby](#)

You must apply for your baby's visa online. It is free to apply and you can do this here: [Apply for a Visa](#). **You should ignore the following warning that comes up**

“If you did not have permission to be in the UK before 1 January 2022 your application is likely to be refused.”

Once the application has been submitted, the baby needs to provide their biometrics; children under 6 are not fingerprinted but will need to be photographed. If your baby has already obtained a Ukrainian biometric passport, their biometrics can be uploaded electronically. If your baby does not have a biometric passport then it will be necessary to book an [appointment online](#) for your baby to be photographed.

If you have difficulty in making a visa application for your baby please attend the Ukraine Assistance Centre to speak to the Law Centre or contact the Law Centre: Tel: **02890 244401** or email: admin@lawcentreni.org as they may be able to assist.

You may also wish to apply for a Ukrainian passport for your child. Details can be found at the section below: **Ukrainian Passports**. This means that should you need to travel outside the UK the passport will permit the baby to travel with you and the visa will permit the baby's re-entry to the UK.

Ukrainian Passports

Information relating to Ukrainian passports can be obtained from the Ukrainian consulate in Edinburgh. Contact the consulate via:

- Email: **gc_gbe@mfa.gov.ua / uaconsedin@gmail.com**
- Telephone: **+44 (0) 131 556 0023 / +44 (0) 790 905 6906**

Section 3: Getting Around

Public Transport

Public transport in Northern Ireland is run by Translink. More information on timetables, fares and travel updates can be found on the [Translink website](#). Please be aware that Translink also runs services which cross the border with the Republic of Ireland. If you are planning to travel to the Republic of Ireland, please ensure that you have the correct visas to enable travel, as per any international border.

Driving in Northern Ireland

At present, Ukrainian driving licences cannot be exchanged for Northern Ireland licences.

You can use your Ukrainian driving licence to drive small vehicles (such as cars and motorcycles) up to 12 months from the date you become resident in Northern Ireland. To continue driving beyond this 12-month period, you will need to apply for a Northern Ireland provisional driving licence and then pass both theory and practical driving tests. Information on how to apply for a licence can be found here: [nidirect: driving licence](#).

Cars will need to be insured, taxed, and tested regularly (MOT) as it is an offence to drive or keep a vehicle of MOT test age on the public road without a valid vehicle test certificate if your vehicle requires one. Information on vehicle testing can be found here: [nidirect: vehicle](#).

Travelling across the land border

The border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland is an international border. Although British and Irish citizens have the right to travel freely across this border, citizens of other countries must ensure that they have the correct visas to enable travel, as per any international border. There are no systematic border

checks, though public transport which crosses the border may occasionally be stopped in the Republic of Ireland. People living close to the border in particular, should take the border into consideration when planning a journey.

Section 4: Accessing Services

Details of how to access the services that you may need are outlined below. You can also get advice and support on eligibility and access to services from the [Ukrainian Assistance Centres](#).

Opening a bank account

If you are earning a wage or claiming benefits, you will need a bank account. There are a range of banks and you can choose one which suits you best. There are also online only providers which you can use.

To open a bank account, you will usually need to show a form of identification such as your passport, BRP, Driver's Licence or a recognised identity card. You should ask about any charges when you open a bank account. Once you open your account, you will usually be issued with a debit card. You can also arrange for bills to be paid directly from your account using 'direct debit'.

Further information on how to open a bank account is available here: [nidirect: banks](#)

National Insurance Number

National Insurance is a tax on earnings and self-employed profits, which is paid into a fund, from which some state benefits are paid such as the state pension, statutory sick pay, maternity leave or entitlement to additional unemployment benefits. It is therefore paid by all workers, including the self-employed. You can look for and start work without a National Insurance Number if you can prove you can work in the UK by showing your visa or BRP. This will have your Right to Work status printed on the back.

A National Insurance Number is a code with letters and numbers and once allocated to you it never changes. It is used to make sure your National Insurance contributions and tax are recorded against your name only. A National Insurance

number will also be needed for payment of benefits, although you do not need one to start a benefits application. More information about National Insurance Numbers can be found here: [nidirect: National Insurance](#)

Help with obtaining your National Insurance Number can be found:

- At the [Ukrainian Assistance Centres](#) or
- At your local Jobs and Benefits office. Locations of Jobs and Benefits offices can be found here: [nidirect: Jobs and Benefits Offices](#).

Applying for Benefits

The UK has a welfare system, designed to help those who face financial hardship, or who have specific needs. Benefits that you may be eligible for include:

- Universal Credit – a payment for those of working age, to help with your living costs if you are on a low income. You could be working (including self-employed or part time) or be out of work;
- Pension Credit - extra money to help with your living costs if you are over the age of 66 and on a low income;
- Disability benefits – extra money to help with additional costs if you have a long term physical or mental health condition or disability;
- Carer's Allowance – extra money if you care for someone at least 35 hours a week; and
- Child Benefit – extra money to help with the cost of raising a child.

Help with your benefits application can be found:

- At the [Ukrainian Assistance Centres](#)
- At your local Jobs and Benefits office. Locations of Jobs and Benefits offices can be found here: [nidirect: Jobs and Benefits Offices](#).
- From the [Make the Call](#) service. This service makes sure you're getting all the benefits, services and supports you're entitled to. Calls to Make the Call are free on **0800 232 1271**. Or email them at [**makethecall@dfcni.gov.uk**](mailto:makethecall@dfcni.gov.uk)

More information about how to claim benefits can be found here: [nidirect: benefits claim](#)

Health Care

The 'Access to Health and Social Care' Booklet, contains important information about all aspects of health care, including registering with a Family Doctor, maternity services, mental health, childhood immunisation, dentists etc. It is available here: [Access to Health and Social Care Booklet](#). When the link opens click on the language of your choice.

Registering for a doctor

Although you may register directly with your family doctor, this can be a lengthy and complicated process, we would therefore encourage you, if possible, to do this at one of the Ukrainian Assistance Centres. Staff there will also be able to provide you with additional information and advice relating to your health needs. You can find information about the locations and opening times of the Assistance Centres here: [Ukraine Assistance Centres](#).

Notifying the Health Trust of your arrival

It is important that the Health Trust is made aware of all Ukrainian arrivals to ensure that health needs can be met. Please email: UkraineHealth2@belfasttrust.hscni.net as soon as possible after your arrival in Northern Ireland. Please provide the Trust with: your name, address, contact details, the number in your family and your arrival date.

Information about Health Services in Northern Ireland

You can find more information about different Health Services in Northern Ireland here: [Health Services](#)

Covid 19

You can find information on **Covid-19 vaccinations** here: [nidirect: covid](#)

Education (ages 4 to 16)

Every child aged between four and sixteen is entitled to a school place. Children who have arrived in Northern Ireland from Ukraine have the same right to schooling as any other child.

Finding a school

Applications for a school place should be made directly to individual schools. An application form (AP1) should be submitted directly to the preferred school(s). This form is available from the Education Authority website: [School application form](#). Further Information about the Education Authority can be found here: [Education Authority](#) and to find a school near you, use the Education Authority search engine, available here: [School Search](#).

For children coming up to a key transition point (i.e. due to commence primary education or post-primary education in September 2022), contact should be made in the first instance with the Education Authority helpdesk: This is open Monday to Thursday 8am–6pm and Friday 8am–5pm. You can contact them on telephone: **028 9598 5595** ; or through this webpage: [Admissions Helpdesk | Education Authority Northern Ireland](#)

To translate any of the information on the Education Authority website into other languages, use the orange translation tool at the top of the page.

Free School Meals and Uniform Grants

You may be eligible for free school meals and/or a uniform grant. To find out if you are eligible and to make an application, see here: [Free School Meals/Uniform Grant](#).

If you have difficulty with the application process, contact the Meals and Uniform Service, whose contact details can be found here: [Meals and Uniform Service](#).

School Transport

You may be eligible for transport assistance. To find out if you are eligible, see here: [Transport Assistance: Eligibility](#). To make an application for transport assistance see here: [Transport Assistance: Application](#)

Education (ages 16+)

Compulsory education ends at 16, although children may continue their education for a further two years. Children arriving in Northern Ireland who are over the age of 16 may not therefore be able to find a place in school.

Further education includes any study after secondary education that is not part of higher education (that is, not taken as part of an undergraduate or graduate degree). Find information on Further Education courses and qualifications for 16 to 19 year olds here: [nidirect: further education](#).

Learning English

ESOL stands for *English for Speakers of Other Languages*. If you would like to learn or improve your English, you should join an ESOL class. ESOL classes are delivered through Further Education Colleges and are available for every level of learner. These are free for Ukrainians who are in Northern Ireland on a Homes for Ukraine or Family Sponsor Scheme. Informal ESOL classes are also provided by a number of community groups. These are also usually free. There are some private language schools, which provide formal ESOL classes, although these will not be free.

For more information about ESOL in your area, check [ESOL NI](#), contact your local Further Education College, your local council or a local community group.

Section 5: Working in Northern Ireland

How to find a job

You have the right to work as soon as you arrive, having been granted a UK Visa. Information on how to look for and apply for a job can be found on nidirect: [Finding a job | nidirect](#)

Jobs and Benefits Offices can support you in finding employment. You can meet with Jobs and Benefits staff at the Ukrainian Assistance Centres, or you can make an appointment at a local Jobs and Benefits Office. To make an appointment, visit the Jobs and Benefits website, click on the name of your local town and contact them using the contact details provided: [Jobs and Benefits Offices](#)

Right to Work checks

Prospective employers will ask you to show proof that you have the right to work in the UK. If you have already received your BRP, this can be provided as proof. If you are still waiting for your BRP, you can show any of the following:

1. The UK Entry Stamp in your passport, which is valid for 6 months
2. The visa approval email from either Home Office or Drumkeen Surgery. It is possible that your sponsor received this email rather than you. If you do not have a copy of this, please ask your sponsor to forward.
3. A 'share code'. This is a digital certificate provided by the Home Office which confirms your right to work. This is an online process which can be accessed here: [Prove your right to work to an employer](#). You will need your passport or national identity card number to complete the process.

Employment Rights

You have the right to be treated fairly at work. Men and women have the right to work and have equal rights and duties.

You have the right to work in a safe environment and be free from threats, violence and harassment from your employer, colleagues, or customers.

Employers must respect the needs of employees as long as it does not interfere with the work they are employed to do.

It is illegal to discriminate against anyone applying for a job or in the workplace on the basis of gender, race, religion, being married or in a civil partnership, disability, age, sexual orientation, being pregnant.

Working hours - This is usually a maximum 48 hours a week on average. If you are under 18, you can't work more than 8 hours a day or 40 hours a week.

You should keep your ID documents (for example your ID or passport) – your employer does not have the right to keep them.

The terms and conditions of your work will be in your contract. Make sure you read your contract carefully before signing it and ensure you keep a copy.

More information on your employment rights can be found here:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work/rights-at-work>

Getting your qualifications recognised in the UK

If you are resident in Northern Ireland and need to check your qualifications against UK equivalents, you can access the free Qualification Equivalence Service by contacting your local Jobs and Benefits Office. You can find the contact details for your local office on [nidirect](#). To avail of this service you will need to have a copy of your qualification certificate or details of this.

If you have a professional qualification in a profession, which is regulated in the UK, and you wish to work in that profession, you will need to have your qualification

officially recognised by the appropriate regulator for your profession. You will need to do this even if you are doing temporary or one-off work.

The UK Centre for Professional Qualifications (UK CPQ) is a free service that can provide you with information to help you get your qualifications recognised in the UK. You can look at the [UK CPQ website](#) for more information. Or you can ring their enquiry service on **0871 226 2850**.

There are over 200 regulated professions in the UK. A list of the regulated professions and the associated regulators is also on the UK Government website: [Professions regulated in the UK and their regulators](#).

Should you require assistance in understanding your employment rights, contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work/rights-at-work>

Finding Childcare

If you get a job you may need to find Childcare. You can access a specified amount of free Childcare depending on your circumstances. For more information, please go to: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/parenting-andchildcare/childcare>

Section 6: Accommodation

Your living arrangements six months after moving to the UK

This section explains your options when you have lived in the UK for six months and includes links to more support. This is in addition to the information and guidance provided on [nidirect](#) which is regularly updated.

We encourage you to talk to your host about your future plans four months after your arrival in the UK, to give you plenty of time to decide and prepare for your next steps.

To find out more information about your accommodation options, see the information in this section. You can also:

- Visit the nidirect website: [nidirect: accommodation](#)
- Visit a [Ukraine Assistance Centre](#) and speak to NIHE staff;
- Contact NIHE Housing Solutions Support on Tel: **03448 920900**. An advisor will take your contact details and arrange for a housing advisor to contact you. Interpreting support will be provided if needed.

The information in this section is for Northern Ireland only. Guidance applying in the other nations of the UK can be found at:

[England](#)

[Wales](#)

[Scotland](#)

Emergency Accommodation

If there is an immediate need to secure urgent alternative accommodation (if you decide you can no longer live with your sponsor or your sponsor asks you to leave) you can call the Northern Ireland Housing Executive emergency number on:

- Tel: **03448 920 900** (Monday – Friday during office hours)
- Tel: **03448 920 908** (after 5pm Monday – Friday or at the weekends)

If your sponsorship arrangement ends before six months

If for any reason either you or your host does not want to continue with the sponsorship arrangement for the full six months, there are other accommodation choices available, and you can get help with this. If your sponsorship ends or is at risk of ending, you should contact Homes for Ukraine via email:

homesforukraine@nihe.gov.uk

It may be possible to 'rematch' you with a new sponsor who has offered accommodation through the Homes for Ukraine scheme but who has not yet had a Ukrainian guest placed with them.

Before a re-match is made, the new sponsor's home will be assessed to ensure it is suitable.

After you have moved into the new accommodation, a home visit will be made by either Extern or Barnardos to check that you are satisfied with the new placement.

Support will be provided to try and find accommodation that meets the needs of your family, and a re-match will only be arranged with your full agreement. If you would like to find another sponsorship arrangement email Homes for Ukraine at: homesforukraine@nihe.gov.uk

Staying with your host after six months

Your host may be happy for you to continue to stay with them for another six months. Where this is the case, this is likely to be the best option for you until you are ready to move on.

Not every host can continue to offer accommodation after six months. Where that is the case, we encourage you to develop a plan with your host about how you move on.

Finding a new host

If you are not able to continue with your current host but are also not ready to move into your own accommodation, you may want to find a new host. You have a choice about who your new host is, and they do not need to be located in your current local area. You may already know someone who could host you, for example, through your local faith group, other community groups, your place of work, or your current host. There are also several charities that may be able to help, such as [RESET](#).

Once you have found a new host for yourself, you should contact Homes for Ukraine via email: homesforukraine@nihe.gov.uk so they can make the necessary checks to approve the arrangement. This should happen **before** you move in with your new host. If you do not follow this process and move in with a new host without these checks being made, your new host may not receive their £350 thank you payments.

Moving to another area of the UK outside Northern Ireland

If you want to move to another area of the UK, you should contact Homes for Ukraine via email: homesforukraine@nihe.gov.uk so they can make any necessary checks and can confirm your new living arrangements are suitable.

Community groups, local charities and local councils in England, Scotland and Wales have dedicated websites to give you more information about an area before you decide to move.

You can search for the different council areas outside of Northern Ireland [here](#).

If you have a child aged between 4 and 16 it is important to consider the availability of school places in the area that you are thinking of moving to.

Renting private accommodation

If you are considering renting your own accommodation, make sure you know what your rights and responsibilities are as a tenant. Read more about renting here:

[Housing Advice NI](#)

More information can also be found on nidirect: [nidirect: renting](#)

This information will help you when you are ready and able to move out of your host's accommodation.

You may be entitled to Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, which could help with the cost of rent. The Make the Call Team can offer you some advice on this. Calls to Make the Call are free on **0800 232 1271**. Or email them at

makethecall@dfcni.gov.uk

Information is available here on renting in [England](#), [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#)

Social Housing

You may want to join the waiting list for social housing. This is rented accommodation provided by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) or through registered Housing Associations at affordable rent levels, which are typically lower than average private market rents. There is, however, a very large demand for social housing with over 40,000 people currently on the waiting list. To find out more about social housing, you can visit a [Ukraine Assistance Centre](#) and speak to NIHE staff. Alternatively, contact NIHE Housing Solutions Support on Tel: **03448 920900**. An advisor will take your contact details and arrange for a housing advisor to contact you. Interpreting support will be provided if needed

Section 7: Community Support and Leisure

Councils

There are 11 councils in Northern Ireland which support the development and delivery of services at a local level. Information on what is happening in your local community can often be found on your council's website. Information on how to contact each council area along with useful links/contacts for each area is attached at **Annex B**.

Facebook Groups

There are a number of Facebook support groups which have been set up by Ukrainians to help link and support Ukrainians living in their area. For example:

- [Ukrainians in Northern Ireland](#)
- [Ukrainian Community Ards and North Down](#)
- [Ukrainian Community in Belfast](#)
- [Ukrainian Community in South Down](#)

Foodbanks

Food banks are community organisations that can help if you can't afford the food you need. They provide a valuable service to communities and are continually helping to feed those in need. Some foodbanks are managed by the Trussell Trust and others are managed by local community groups and churches. To find a Trussell Trust foodbank see here: [Find a foodbank](#)

In order to access some foodbanks it may be necessary to first obtain a referral from a local advice agency.

Advice Agencies

There are independent advice agencies across Northern Ireland which can advise on a range of issues, such as benefits, housing, health, work etc. To find an advice agency local to you, visit:

- [Advice NI](#)
- [Citizens Advice](#)

Community groups

Some community and faith-based organisations have volunteers who might be able to provide some practical help or support in getting to know your local community. One organisation is Welcome Churches, which manages the Welcome Boxes project which is a network of volunteers trained to support refugees. To find out more about Welcome Boxes, visit their website: [Welcome Boxes](#).

Leisure

Your council website will have information about leisure centres, sports facilities, community groups as well as local events or festivals. See **Annex B** for links to your local council.

Other websites which have information on things to do in your free time in Northern Ireland include:

[Discover Northern Ireland](#)

[Walk NI](#)

[Volunteer Now](#)

Section 8: Emergency Support and Keeping Safe

Health Emergencies

If you or a family member has an accident or a sudden serious illness you will need to go to your nearest hospital with an Accident and Emergency Department, where treatment is free for everyone.

If you are able to, you should make your own way to the Accident and Emergency Department. If you are unable to make your own way and if it is an emergency, call **999** and ask for an ambulance to transport you to hospital. This service is free of charge and should therefore only be used in an emergency. Further detail can be found here: [Hospitals, Accidents and Emergencies](#)

Human Trafficking and Slavery

A person is trafficked if they are moved from one location to another by people who control, intimidate and coerce them to do work they do not want to do often, for little or no money. Trafficking and slavery are serious crimes. If you think you, or someone you know, may have been trafficked you should contact:

- The Police Service of Northern Ireland:
www.psni.police.uk/crime/humantrafficking/ or phone 101 or 999
- Modern Slavery Helpline: 0800 012 1700
- Migrant Help: info@migranthelpuk.org or the 24 hour helpline for victims of trafficking 028 92 448449
- Women's Aid: support@belfastwomensaid.org.uk

For further information, please see the following links:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/human-trafficking-leaflet>
[Modern slavery and human trafficking | nidirect](#)

Domestic and Sexual abuse

When a close family member or a current or former partner is abusive to you, you're experiencing domestic abuse. Domestic abuse can involve physical, controlling or coercive behaviour, verbal, emotional, financial or online abuse and threats to harm or kill you. Domestic abuse can happen anywhere and **it is a crime**.

You can find more information here: [Domestic abuse | nidirect](#). To translate the website into other languages, use the translation tool at the top of the page.

How to get help

Reach out to friends, family or any of the following support services that are available:

- In an emergency dial 999 (If you can't speak, press 55 to let police know it is an emergency);
- Phone 101 to report, or press 55 if you cannot speak;
- Call the freephone 24 hour Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline tel: 0808-802-1414;
- Call Crimestoppers confidentially on 0800 555 111;
- Stay safe after domestic or sexual abuse: [Staying Safe](#);

Victims of Crime or Abuse

If you have been a victim of crime or abuse in Northern Ireland, there are organisations and groups that can provide you with free advice and support. You can find further information here: [Support Services for Victims](#)

Annex A: IMPORTANT NUMBERS AND LINKS

EMERGENCY

For all EMERGENCIES, where life is in danger, there is a medical emergency, there is a fire or a crime is in progress

Call 999

PUBLIC SERVICES

| Organisation/ Service | Email | Telephone Number | Web Address/Link |
|---|--|--|--|
| Police/Fire/Ambulance Service of Northern Ireland | | Emergency call 999 Non-emergency: 101 | www.psnipolice.uk |
| Emergency Accommodation (The Northern Ireland Housing Executive) | | 03448 920 900 (during office hours) or 03448 920 908 after 5pm Monday – Friday or at the weekends | www.nihe.gov.uk |
| Domestic Abuse | helpline@womensaid.org.uk | Domestic and Sexual Abuse helpline (NI): 0808 802 1414 National Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 2000 247 | Refuge Women's Aid Citizens Advice Domestic abuse nidirect Online live chat help@dsahelpline.org |
| Protecting and caring for your children | help@nspcc.org.uk | (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)): 0808 800 5000 Childline: 080 1111 | www.nspcc.org.uk www.childline.org.uk |
| Modern Slavery Helpline | | 0800 0121 700 | www.northernireland.gov.uk/news/be-alert-modern-day-slavery |

INFORMATION

| Organisation/ Service | Email | Telephone Number | Web Address/Link |
|--|--|------------------|--|
| Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) | | | Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership |
| Make the Call | makethecall@dfcni.gov.uk | 0800 232 1271 | www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/make-call-service |
| nidirect Ukraine Pages | | | Northern Ireland nidirect |
| Homes for Ukraine Scheme | | | https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk/ |
| Ukrainian Assistance Centre | | | www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/ukraine-assistance-centres |
| Ukraine Family Scheme | | 0808 164 8810 | www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-ukraine-family-scheme-visa |

SERVICES

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|--|
| Benefits | | Universal Credit: 0800 328 5644 | www.gov.uk/browse/benefits |
| Councils | | | www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/local-councils-in-northern-ireland |
| DAERA - Travelling with pets | daeratradeimports@daera-ni.gov.uk | 0044 2890 524412 | Travelling with pets |
| Education | | | Asylum Seeker and refugee support |
| Employment | | Job Centre: 02890 909327 | Jobs and Benefits offices nidirect JobapplyNI |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| NIHE Housing Solutions Support | homesforukraine@nihe.gov.uk | 03448 920900 | |
| Visa Help | | UK Visa Helpline: 080 8164 8810 Law Centre NI: 028 90 244401 | |

COMMUNITY

| Organisation/ Service | Email | Telephone Number | Web Address/Link |
|---|--|--|---|
| Migrant Help | northernireland@migranthehelpuk.org | 028 92 448449 (Out of hours urgent trafficking queries only) | |
| Red Cross | | 028 9073 5350 | https://www.redcross.org.uk/get-help/get-help-as-a-refugee/help-for-refugees-from-ukraine |
| Barnardo's | | <u>0800 148 8586</u> | www.barnardos.org.uk/what-we-do/services/barnardos-ukrainian-support-helpline |
| Ukrainian Community Belfast | | | Ukrainian Community in Belfast |
| Ukrainian Community Ards and North Down | | | Ukrainian Community Ards and North Down |
| Ukrainians in Northern Ireland Community Group | | | https://www.facebook.com/UKRAINIANSinNI/ |
| Ukrainian Community in South Down | | | https://www.facebook.com/groups/544958337061293/?ref=share |

OTHERS

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| About Northern Ireland | | | About Northern Ireland nidirect |
| Institution of Translation and Interpreting | | | https://www.iti.org.uk/ukrainian-crisis.html |
| Recognition of professional qualifications | | | Recognition of professional qualifications |
| Republic of Ireland links | | | FAQs – for Ukraine Nationals and Residents of Ukraine - Immigration Service Delivery (irishimmigration.ie) www.irishrail.ie/en-ie/station/dublin-connolly |
| Translation Help | | | https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/translation-help |

Annex B: Local Councils

Click on your council's name for the home page of their website and see below for links to useful groups and contacts for each council area:

| | |
|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Antrim & Newtownabbey</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Useful links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community information | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Ards & North Down</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Useful links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Down YMCA • The Link Family and Community Centre |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Useful links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Centres | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Belfast City</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Useful links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community pages • Independent Advice Providers |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Causeway Coast & Glens</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Useful links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for Ukrainians | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Derry & Strabane</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Useful links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Fermanagh & Omagh</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Useful links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Support Services | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Lisburn & Castlereagh</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Useful links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Things to do |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Mid & East Antrim</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Useful links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interethnic Forum • Community Advice Services | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Mid Ulster</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Useful links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Advice Services |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Newry, Mourne & Down</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Useful links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnic Minority Support Centre • Support for Ukrainians | |