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Guidance

Week one guidance for Ukrainians arriving in the UK

Updated 29 April 2022

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This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/welcome-a-guide-for-ukrainians-arriving-in-the-uk/week-one-guidance-for-ukrainians-arriving-in-the-uk>

This is a quick guide to services you may need in your first week in the UK. Fuller information can be found in the [welcome guide \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/welcome-a-guide-for-ukrainians-arriving-in-the-uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/welcome-a-guide-for-ukrainians-arriving-in-the-uk).

Before you arrive

We recommend that you let your sponsor know when and where you will be arriving, so they can support you to make arrangements for your journey to your accommodation, and they may be able to meet you on arrival.

Welcome points

There are a number of major entry ports to the UK, including airports, where there will be welcome points for you to meet your sponsor and where you can seek support, including to arrange your onward travel. If you are unsure of the location of the welcome point please speak to Border Force or a member of staff at your port of arrival. You can find the full list of welcome points here under '[Where are welcome points?](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-scheme-frequently-asked-questions#sponsors)' (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-scheme-frequently-asked-questions#sponsors).

Welcome points can provide the following:

- a welcome point, with: toilets, telephone, telephone charging facilities and translation capability
- provision of any necessary immediate humanitarian assistance
- link with local travel operators for advice about travel
- triage point if matching arrangements fall down or if not met by a host and potential provision of overnight hotel accommodation
- provision of basic 'welcome pack'

How to apply for a biometric residence permit (BRP)

A biometric residence permit (BRP) can be used to confirm your:

- identity
- right to study
- right to any public services or benefits you're entitled to

You can [apply for a BRP once arrived in the UK \(https://apply.visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/ukraine-scheme-brp\)](https://apply.visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/ukraine-scheme-brp).

How to claim your interim payment

We know that you're likely to need cash when you arrive to buy food and essentials. Your local council will provide you with £200 per guest, which you do not need to pay back.

You need to contact your local council to claim this payment. If you are unsure who your local council is, you can search for it using [find your local council \(https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council\)](https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council).

How to set up a bank account

To open a bank or building society account, you'll probably need to:

- make sure you have an email address set up in your name and a valid phone number, to help the bank or building society communicate with you
- collect all your identification and visa documents

You can apply for an account either in person at a bank or building society branch (you may need to make an appointment), over the phone, online or via a bank's mobile app. If going into a branch, you should take all relevant identification documents with you.

If you don't have all the identification documents, take all the information you have with you to the bank or building society. Banks and building societies are encouraged to consider alternative ways to identify and verify their customers, and the government has been working closely with the sector to support access for incoming Ukrainian nationals who may not have standard documentation for identity verification.

There are a range of providers, and you can choose one that suits you best.

How to claim Universal Credit

The UK has a welfare system which is designed to help those who face financial hardship, or who have specific needs. Your local Jobcentre Plus will be able to help you find out which benefits you may be able to access, or [check online \(https://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits\)](https://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits).

You can [find your nearest Jobcentre Plus \(https://find-your-nearest-jobcentre.dwp.gov.uk/search.php\)](https://find-your-nearest-jobcentre.dwp.gov.uk/search.php).

You can apply for Universal Credit online, which is a payment for those of working age (18 and over), to help with your living costs if you're on a low income. To apply online you'll need:

- your bank, building society or credit union account details
- an email address
- access to a phone

You'll also have to prove your identity. You'll need some identity documents for this, for example your:

- passport
- debit or credit card

[Apply for Universal Credit \(https://www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit\)](https://www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit).

There are two ways to get help with your Universal Credit claim. You can either call the Universal Credit helpline or use the Help to Claim service.

Calls to the Universal Credit helpline are free - Telephone: 0800 328 5644 13. You can get free support from trained advisers to make a Universal Credit claim.

The [Help to Claim service \(https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/helptoclaim\)](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/helptoclaim) is provided by Citizens Advice and is confidential. They will not share your personal information unless you agree.

Get an advance on your first payment

If you need help to pay your bills or cover other costs while you wait for your first Universal Credit payment, you can apply to get an advance. The most you can get as an advance is the amount of your first estimated payment.

You can apply for an advance payment in your online account or through your Jobcentre Plus work coach.

You'll need to:

- explain why you need an advance
- verify your identity (you'll do this when you apply online or on the phone with a work coach)
- provide bank account details for the advance (talk to your work coach if you cannot open an account)

You'll usually find out the same day if you can get an advance.

This advance must be paid back and you will start paying it back out of your first payment. You can choose how many months you pay the advance back over, within the time limit. You do not pay interest on it - the total amount you pay back is the same.

How to seek healthcare support

To find and register with your nearest local doctor (GP) service and for more information please see [how to register with a GP surgery \(http://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/gps/how-to-register-with-a-gp-surgery\)](http://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/gps/how-to-register-with-a-gp-surgery).

Scotland has a slightly different system. You can find out [how to register with a GP surgery in Scotland \(https://www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/nhs-services/doctors/registering-with-a-gp-practice\)](https://www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/nhs-services/doctors/registering-with-a-gp-practice).

How to access health care services (NHS) urgently

If you or a family member has a serious accident or a sudden serious illness, including a mental health crisis, you should go to your nearest hospital with an Accident and Emergency department. Emergency treatment at Accident and Emergency services at NHS hospitals is free for everyone.

If it is an extreme emergency, call 999 or 112 and ask for an ambulance to transport you to a hospital. This service is free of charge but should only be used in an emergency. If you are able to do so, you may also make your own way to the Accident and Emergency department.

If you need treatment or advice that is not an emergency, but cannot wait until you next see your GP, you can obtain advice by calling 111.

You can find out more information on [when to call 999 \(https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/urgent-and-emergency-care-services/when-to-call-999/\)](https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/urgent-and-emergency-care-services/when-to-call-999/).

Minor injuries: The NHS also provides Walk-In or Urgent Treatment Centres where you can receive treatment for minor injuries such as cuts, sprains and small fractures, or receive urgent medical advice, without having made an appointment. You can find your nearest [Urgent Treatment Centre \(https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/other-services/Urgent%20Treatment%20Centre/LocationSearch/10022\)](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/other-services/Urgent%20Treatment%20Centre/LocationSearch/10022)

Mental Health: If you would like to seek support for your mental health but do not want to talk to a GP, there are a wide-range of support organisations that offer helplines where you can talk in confidence to a trained advisor. These include:

- [Lifeline \(https://www.lifelinehelpline.info/\)](https://www.lifelinehelpline.info/) on 0808 808 8000 - (Textphone: 18001 0808 808 8000)
- [Samaritans \(https://www.samaritans.org/\)](https://www.samaritans.org/) on 116 123 to talk to a trained volunteer for free
- [MIND England \(https://www.mind.org.uk/\)](https://www.mind.org.uk/)
- [MIND Northern Ireland \(https://www.mindingyourhead.info/services\)](https://www.mindingyourhead.info/services)
- [MIND Scotland \(https://www.supportinmindscotland.org.uk\)](https://www.supportinmindscotland.org.uk)
- [MIND Wales \(https://www.mind.org.uk/about-us/mind-cymru/\)](https://www.mind.org.uk/about-us/mind-cymru/)

Accessing education

All children and young people arriving under the Ukraine Family Scheme and Homes for Ukraine have the right to access state education whilst in the UK. Attending school is vital in helping children integrate into the communities in which they are living.

In the UK, children aged 5 to 16 are required to be in full-time education. Parents and carers should contact the local council for guidance on applying for a school.

The local council supporting you and your family will assist you with accessing this. This can either be:

- within a free state-funded school
- within an independent school (otherwise known as a private school or public school), which will normally charge fees for your child's education; or
- you can choose to home-educate your child

England

Contact your [local council \(https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council\)](https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council) to find:

- state-funded schools in your area
- [admissions criteria \(https://www.gov.uk/schools-admissions/admissions\)](https://www.gov.uk/schools-admissions/admissions) - criteria for the schools you are interested in

Wales

- [Primary School places \(https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-primary-school-place\)](https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-primary-school-place)
- [Secondary School places \(https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-secondary-school-place\)](https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-secondary-school-place)

Northern Ireland

You can find full information on [applying for all school places and placing requests \(https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/applying-school-place\)](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/applying-school-place).

Scotland

You can find full information on [applying for all school places and placing requests \(https://www.mygov.scot/register-your-child-for-a-school/\)](https://www.mygov.scot/register-your-child-for-a-school/).

Emergency housing

If for any reason you are unable to stay with your sponsors immediately after arrival, your local council can provide emergency accommodation. The welcome point at your entry location will be able to advise you how to make contact, or you can [find your local council \(https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council\)](https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council).

Other useful links

- [Welcome: a guide for Ukrainians arriving in the UK \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/welcome-a-guide-for-ukrainians-arriving-in-the-uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/welcome-a-guide-for-ukrainians-arriving-in-the-uk)
 - [Homes for Ukraine scheme: frequently asked questions \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-scheme-frequently-asked-questions\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-scheme-frequently-asked-questions)
 - [Help for families with children from Barnardo's \(https://www.barnardos.org.uk/what-we-do/helping-families/ukrainian-helpline\)](https://www.barnardos.org.uk/what-we-do/helping-families/ukrainian-helpline)
 - [Help for Ukrainian nationals from the British Red Cross \(https://www.redcross.org.uk/get-help/get-help-as-a-refugee/help-for-refugees-from-ukraine\)](https://www.redcross.org.uk/get-help/get-help-as-a-refugee/help-for-refugees-from-ukraine)
 - [Help from the Post Office on money transfers and residency permits \(https://www.postoffice.co.uk/dec-ukraine\)](https://www.postoffice.co.uk/dec-ukraine)
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