



Dear Host,

The 24th of February 2023 marked one year since the start of the aggressive and tragic Russian invasion of Ukraine. The invasion has resulted in the displacement of approximately 6.5 million people inside Ukraine and has seen 7.8 million people registering as refugees across Europe, resulting in the largest refugee crisis since the Second World War.

According to the gov.uk website, over 100,000 Ukrainians have sought sanctuary in the UK through the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, making it one of the fastest, biggest, and most generous visa programmes in British history.

You can view the UK Government's humanitarian response in full [here](#).

Without the generosity, compassion, and kindness of hosts such as yourselves, the Homes for Ukraine Scheme would not work as well as it does, so a huge, heartfelt thank you for all that you continue to do for our and your Ukrainian guests.

National moment of silence to mark one year of Russian invasion of Ukraine

A national minute's silence took place at 11am on Friday 24 February to mark the one-year anniversary of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak lead the nation in silence from Downing Street.

This national moment of reflection offered the UK public the chance to pay tribute to the courage of the Ukrainian people and demonstrate the UK's unwavering solidarity with the country.

The national minute's silence came following the historic visit of President Zelenksyy earlier this month. During the visit, the Prime Minister underlined the UK's steadfast commitment to supporting Ukraine for the long term, ensuring it can secure a lasting peace.

Scheme Extension and Thank-you payment.

Following the announcement pre-Christmas from the Department of Levelling up Housing and Communities, we emailed last week to explain that Kent has decided to extend its additional top ups for the Homes for Ukraine thank you payments. This has been based on positive feedback received and it has been decided to keep this payment scheme until 31 March 2024. By offering increased payments we are hoping this will continue to support you and allow us time to work with all guests to explore long term sustainable accommodation. We have seen many guests move into private rented accommodation over the past few months which has supported families to live independently.

For those housing guests who have been in Kent up to 12 months

Number of Ukrainian guests	Thank you payment	Top-up payment	Total monthly payment
1 guest	£350	£50	£400
2 guests	£350	£150	£500
3 guests	£350	£250	£600
4 guests	£350	£350	£700
5 guests	£350	£450	£800
6 guests	£350	£550	£900
7 or more guests	£350	£650	£1,000

For those housing guests who have been in Kent more than 12 months

Number of Ukrainian guests	Thank -you payment	Top-up payment	Total monthly payment
1 guest	£500	£0	£500
2 guests	£500	£0	£500
3 guests	£500	£100	£600

Number of Ukrainian guests	Thank -you payment	Top-up payment	Total monthly payment
4 guests	£500	£200	£700
5 guests	£500	£300	£800
6 guests	£500	£400	£900
7 or more guests	£500	£500	£1,000

In addition to the increased monthly 'Thank You' payments, for those hosts who have supported their guests for more than 6 months and are still hosting at the end of March, we will pay a further single payment of £500 in March, in recognition of your continued support during these difficult times.

Education Available for Ukrainians

ESOL Courses

Kent Adult Education offers ESOL courses all over Kent for learners who need to develop their English skills for use in everyday life and/or work. Students will develop speaking, reading, and writing for work and everyday English.

Funding may be available, please contact Kent Adult Education directly [here](#).

Homes for Ukraine Kent Facebook Page

We now have a Facebook page containing up and coming events and general information. Click [here](#) to like and share!

Employment Help and Assistance

Prince's Trust

Last year the Prince's Trust helped more than 3,000 young people secure jobs through their 'Get Into' courses. If you are aged 16 to 30 and are looking for 'on the job' experience and training, they can help.

- The courses run from two days to a few weeks.
- Are completely free and won't affect your benefits.
- The Prince's Trust will cover your travel and may be able to support with lunch and childcare costs.
- Find opportunities in retail, hospitality, customer service, health and social care, and construction and engineering.
- After the programme, a Prince's Trust colleague or volunteer will mentor you for up to six months to help you plan your future.

The Prince's Trust run different courses regularly in Kent. Please check their website for upcoming courses where you can register your interest directly.

Employment and Volunteer Opportunities

M&S Jobs for Refugees – M&S recognises the challenges refugees can face in getting a job, sometimes settling into a new job can also be hard. They are proud to welcome refugees at M&S and offer a wide range of vacancies to apply for across the UK. They will ensure that all refugees in employment with M&S will receive additional support to settle into your roles as smoothly as possible. They have excellent wellbeing benefits such as PAM Assist for confidential mental health support, your manager can also pair you up with a buddy to help you when you start. Refugees joining M&S can receive some financial support with travel until your first pay and some M&S vouchers that can be put toward clothing or lunches in your first weeks.

If you hold refugee status and are looking for work, we warmly encourage you to review our vacancies and apply to roles that feel relevant to your experience. Please apply for [here](#).

Job Fairs

Recruitment Event at Trinity, 20 Church Street, Maidstone.

Tuesday 7 March 2023 10am-1pm

Maidstone Borough Council Community Protection Team is holding a recruitment event at Trinity (20 Church Street) for foreign nationals. Various organisations including recruitment agencies and

the DWP will be there to give advice and guidance and support on finding work. This event is free to attend.

Canterbury Big Skills and Jobs Fair. The Chowdry Centre, The Spitfire Old Ground, Old Dover Road, Canterbury.

Wednesday 1st March 2023 10am- 3pm

Kent Cricket Club have offered to host a jobs fair working in Partnership with Canterbury Job Centre.

There will be over 60+ Employers and Providers attending the jobs fair offering a wide range of jobs and courses to support your journey into your first job, a change of career, or to learn new skills.

This event is free to attend but you must register for tickets [here](#).

Deal Jobs & Skills Fair, Tides Leisure Centre

14th March 2023 12-4pm

[A Big Deal for Jobs & Skills!](#) A host of employers will be showcasing local jobs along with a wide range of information and opportunities on further education with East Kent College Group, training, and apprenticeships.

The event is free to attend, and Stagecoach are onboard too with a free shuttle bus operating to Tides Leisure Centre throughout the event. People will be able hop on the free bus at stops in Mill Hill (St Richard's Church Centre), Golf Road Community Centre, Deal train station, and Deal bus station.

STEP Programme

We are very excited to work in Partnership with the World Jewish Relief Organisation to introduce the STEP programme across Kent and enhance employability skills.

The bespoke programme is adapted to everyone's needs and helps refugees gain language skills, qualifications, and training, as well as providing one-to-one assistance in CV writing, interview skills, finding work or setting up their own business.

Graduates of the programme have found work in a range of sectors including retail, hair and beauty, engineering, education, pharmacy, and construction.

You can find more information about the STEP programme on their webpage [here](#)

Home Visits

Due to recent health advice our support workers may carry out some of their planned visits virtually or by telephone. If you would prefer this, please advise the support worker when booking the appointment.

Useful and Interesting Resources for Hosts & Guests

- Starting on 6th March 2023 **Invicta Academy** are offering a FREE after-school course of phonics classes for Ukrainian children based in Kent, aged 4 and up. Classes are online and will run on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday 5.30pm-6.30pm for four weeks. Lessons are taught by a qualified English teacher with a Ukrainian speaking facilitator. Parents are encouraged to join the classes to see how phonics are taught in schools and learn how to support your children with their English learning. Book your free classes here.
- Perfect for the half term, as part of London Zoo's Community Access Scheme, you can now buy reduced price tickets for the zoo at their entry kiosks from as little as £3 per person, if you are receiving Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance. The £3 tickets are available for the whole family (under 3's go free), only at the zoo entrance (not online) from 11am every day of the week, and the current offer runs until the end of March 2023. You'll need to bring a proof of benefit letter with you to the zoo when you buy your tickets(s) from their friendly staff at the admissions gate (this can be an electronic copy if you prefer).
- Widgit have worked with partners and volunteers across Europe to produce a set of free materials to support refugees. These resources are included in a free pack which will help bridge the language barrier between Ukrainian Refugees and their hosts. The pack is available in both Ukrainian and Russian, alongside the language of the host nation.
- Microsoft 365 Package Training in Ukrainian is available on Microsoft's site for free here. Perfect for help creating CV's and Cover Letters.
- Duolingo – learn English for free here
- The British Red Cross is giving £50 to newly arrived Ukrainians. This must be applied for **within the first 14 days after arrival** in the UK. While a Sponsor/Host or other third party cannot apply for this support on a Ukrainian's behalf, a main applicant can apply on behalf of their whole family group. You will need to call the free British Red Cross Support line on 08081 963 651 and select option 3. This line is open daily 10am - 6pm, and interpreters are available. You will be connected to a support worker from the Red Cross who will ask for your names, dates of birth and date of entry to the UK. They will then email requesting a photo of the photo passport page or ID document and visa/date of entry stamps for each member of the group, plus a selfie of the main applicant holding their passport. Once this

process is complete, you will receive a prepaid card with £50. Please note that this may be several weeks after the initial phone call.

Access to Work and Support with Benefits

Guests from Ukraine can look and apply for employment without a National Insurance number. People from Ukraine who have entered the UK under the scheme can prove they have the right to work in other ways by showing their Biometric Residence Permit or their visa in their passport.

People arriving in the UK from Ukraine can now find essential benefits information on a new web page set up by DWP [here](#)

People arriving in the UK from Ukraine because of the Russian invasion can apply for financial help immediately, as well as access tailored job support.

Ukrainians can apply for benefits and other types of financial support from the day they arrive in the UK.

Translation services are available to help new arrivals with phone applications, and work coaches in DWP Jobcentres are on hand to support people making claims online.

DWP staff are also delivering additional face-to-face assistance to those who need it – including tailored support to find work and advice on benefit eligibility – and will continue to do so.

People who sponsor a Ukrainian individual or family will not see their household benefit entitlements affected. For more information, please read the full statement [here](#).

Universal Credit payment can include an amount to help with the costs of looking after your child or children. Childcare guidance can be found [here](#).

Email Address for Escalating Benefits Issues -
kentdistrictoffice.kentukrainiansupport@DWP.GOV.UK

Citizens Advice also offer support in completing benefit applications. Contact numbers and online chat facilities are available [here](#).

Biometric Cards (BRP)

We are aware that guests have been granted 3 years leave to remain, but a number have reported the BRP cards expire 31st December 2024. We have sought some advice regarding this and have been advised that early 2024 guidance will be published . Guests will not need a BRP from 1st January 2025 as they will be able to prove their immigration status online, without a BRP.

Out and About

We really enjoy seeing pictures of our Ukrainian guests out and about in the community and we would love to publish more each month! If you wish to be featured, please email your pictures with a brief description and written, signed consent for publishing from the guest to: ukraineadmin@kent.gov.uk .

Important Announcements for Future Communications

If you wish to opt out of receiving our Monthly Newsletter and would like to be removed from our mailing list, please email: ukraineadmin@kent.gov.uk

You can continue to contact the Homes for Ukraine team directly using our new number, which is 03000 419820. This line will be open from 09:00-17:00, Monday to Friday.