

Katherine Merlo

From: Communications Mailbox
Sent: 11 December 2024 11:42
Subject: Suffolk Ukraine Bulletin: 11 December



Dear all,

Welcome to the Suffolk Ukraine Bulletin. This monthly bulletin provides an update on the situation in Suffolk along with information about the work of the county council and partners within Suffolk's Ukraine Task Group and answers to frequently asked questions.

In this edition you will read about Guidance updates, upcoming events and a reminder on where to receive local support. We are grateful for your support and our regular updates will include further information on how you and your communities can get involved, as we continue to work together to do all we can to help those fleeing the conflict in Ukraine.

The next bulletin will be on Wednesday 12 February 2025. You can read previous editions of the Suffolk Ukraine Bulletin on our website. [You can read previous editions of the Suffolk Ukraine Bulletin on our website](#)

We would also like to take the opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year on behalf of Suffolk's Ukraine Task Group.

Cllr Councillor Philip Faircloth-Mutton,
Suffolk County Council Cabinet Member for Equality and Communities
Stuart Keeble, Director of Public Health in Suffolk



NATIONAL UPDATES

Permission to Travel Letters – Expiry Date Announced

At the start of the Homes for Ukraine scheme, the Home Office initially issued successful applicants with a Permission to Travel letter rather than a visa, and the visa application and biometrics had to be completed within 6 months of the guest arrival in the UK. This changed on 7th December 2023.

Permission to Travel letters did not have an 'expiry date' so there are a number of guests that have been issued PTT letters that have not yet entered the UK. The change is detailed below:

Guests who made their application prior to 7 December 2023 and chose not to attend a visa application centre overseas may be issued a permission to travel letter by UKVI confirming they can travel to the UK. Permission to travel letters are only valid for travel to the UK until 12:01am UK time on 13 February 2025. If an applicant arrives after this date with a permission to travel letter, they may be refused entry to the UK and removed.

- Before travelling, those wishing to come to the UK using a permission to travel letter should contact their sponsor or UK-based family member to ensure they have suitable accommodation in place for their arrival.
- Applicants should only travel to the UK if they have confirmed they have suitable accommodation arrangements in place for their safety and wellbeing.
- Individuals can find out more information on GOV.UK: [Apply for a visa under the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme - GOV.UK](#)
- Individuals may wish to come to the UK under another route and will need to make a new application under that route. Further information can be found on GOV.UK: How to apply for a visa to come to the UK - [How to apply for a visa to come to the UK: Choose a visa - GOV.UK](#)

Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme Update

In February, the Home Office announced that Ukrainians in the UK on one of the Ukraine schemes would be able to apply for the Ukraine Permission Extension (UPE) visa scheme when their existing visa expired, granting them a further 18 months stay in the UK.

On 26th November 2024 the Home Office made amendments to the Immigration Rules, announcing that the Ukraine Permission Extension scheme will be open for applications on 4 February 2025. You can read more here:

[Applying to the Ukraine Permission Extension scheme - GOV.UK](#)

- From 09:00 on 4 February 2025 the UPE will open for applications from Ukrainian citizens and their eligible family members living in the UK under existing Ukraine schemes.
- The new visa route will allow Ukrainians to continue their lives in the UK with the same entitlements to work, study and access to public funds as provided for under the existing Ukraine schemes.
- The route, which will remain fee free and Immigration Health Surcharge exempt, will provide up to an additional 18 months' permission to remain from the date of decision for qualifying applicants; a child may be granted less than 18 months permission if their period of permission is being aligned to that of their parent here on our existing schemes.
- Ukrainians should only make an application to the Ukraine Permission Extension scheme when their current permission has 28 days or less remaining until it expires.

Further information and details will be added by the Home Office to the published guidance for applying prior to February 2025.

Thank you Payments - Update

On 26th November 2024 Lord Khan, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Lords Minister for Faith, Communities and Resettlement) wrote to Local Authority Leaders and Chief Executives with an update on Thank you payments.

You can see the letter to Local Authority Leaders and Chief Executives here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-to-local-authority-leaders-and-chief-executives-on-changes-to-homes-for-ukraine-thank-you-payments>

Key points are:

- To ensure that Ukrainians still in Homes for Ukraine sponsorship arrangements are supported as they transition to UPE visas, we shall be extending thank you payments for eligible hosts for the 18 months they are covered by the Visa issued under the UPE scheme. After a guest's initial 18-month UPE period, thank you payments will discontinue.
- This funding is designed to provide guests and their sponsors with time to plan to live independently, and, if needed, to secure independently funded accommodation. To support this transition, we will be signposting

hosts to the 'rent a room' scheme for those who wish to convert their lodging arrangements with their sponsors. Guests are eligible for Universal Credit for housing benefit up to the Local Housing Allowance rate to assist in these costs.

- To fund this support and ensure it is affordable within government budgets, all thank you payments will be paid at a flat rate of £350 per month with effect from 1 April 2025. This includes thank you payments to hosts where the guest remains in Homes for Ukraine sponsorship and other eligibility criteria are met.

Full guidance relating to this change is expected to be published in January 2025. The UK Government will be writing directly to sponsors in the near future regarding the update.

Suffolk County Council are in the processes of assessing the implications of this change and what actions it can take to mitigate the impact to hosts and guests. We will provide further updates as this progresses.

E-Visa Roll out

The Government is urging all those across the UK who use a physical immigration document to **take immediate action to transition to an e-Visa**, as part of plans to digitise the UK border and immigration system.

If you have Homes for Ukraine guests, please ensure they are progressing their application to move to an e-visa'

E-visa will need to be in place if guests wish to apply for a Ukraine Permission Extension scheme visa when they are eligible

All visa holders who live in the UK and use a physical immigration document, such as a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP), to prove their rights are urged to take action now at [Get access to your eVisa: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Video's explaining what needs to be done and how can be accessed here [Online immigration status \(eVisa\): help videos - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

For more information visit [Gov.UK/eVisa](#):

Ukrainians are asked to retain their BRP – as this will help with a smooth customer experience to apply for the Visa Extension Scheme.



Seasonal Winter 'Thank you' payment.

Suffolk County Council is offering a one-off additional payment of £330 to all hosts who are accommodating Ukrainian guests in January 2025, as recognition of the additional pressures faced during our coldest months. This payment will be made in February to those hosting Ukrainian guests during January 2025 and is in addition to the monthly payment already paid to active hosts on this scheme.

You do not need to make a claim for this payment. An email will be sent to eligible hosts in January 2025 advising they will receive the payments and giving the option to opt out if they choose.

If you are eligible but have chosen not to receive the current monthly Thank You payment and would like to receive this additional Winter Thank you payment, please contact refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk by 3rd February 2025.

Support for Ukrainian Refugees and their hosts

Training:

Understanding Gender Based Violence & Supporting Survivors

The sessions aim to identify gender-based violence (GBV) and its impacts, clarify the links between GBV and migration and demonstrate how to effectively support survivors.

Date: 13th February 2025

Time: 6:30 pm. – 8:30 pm

To register email training@resetuk.org

Trauma Informed Care: Supporting Refugee Families

The session aims to ensure a clear understanding of trauma, to clarify the impacts of trauma on the body, brain and memory and to demonstrate how these impacts may present in the behaviour and wellbeing of refugee families. It also aimed to demonstrate the value of a trauma informed approach, building trust, a sense of safety

and enabling choice through a strength-based approach.

Date: 27th February 2025

Time: 6:30pm - 8:30pm

To register email training@resetuk.org

Training - Budget Workshop



Presented by the
Money Advice Service

Anglia Care Trust
Support • Advice • Action

BUDGETING WORKSHOP

**Tips and Tricks on how to budget and
save yourself some money.**

WHO? For anyone who can benefit from budgeting advice

WHAT? A budgeting workshop to increase your income and help you budget better

WHERE? Teams

WHEN? Every month, please contact us for the next available



Please scan the QR code to look at available dates and to register your interest!

Budgeting Workshop held monthly.

Please contact Anglia Care Trust for dates and times

Phone: 01473 622888

Email: admin@angliacaretrust.org.uk

Conversation Classes

Hope Church English Conversation Classes continue every Thursday morning during school term followed by a Community Cafe. No need to book. Just come along for beginner, intermediate and conversation level classes.

When: Every Thursday

Venue: Hope Centre, 10 St Margaret's St, Ipswich IP4 2AT.

Time: 10:00 am -12:00 pm

Classes for next term start on Thursday 9th January 2025.

The last English lesson at Hope Church this year is a Christmas craft event for Ukrainians and other ESOL learners on Thursday 19 December (10-12.30). Bring a Christmas snack to share.

Independent Living Payment

Suffolk County Council is offering a **one-off Independent Living Payment (ILP) of £2,000** to Ukrainian guests who are part of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme and are leaving their host accommodation and moving into their own home. In order to issue this payment certain criteria must be met, and Suffolk County Council will ask to see a copy of a valid, signed and dated (by both parties) legal tenancy agreement in the guest's name.

The funding can be used for purchasing items to support the move to independent accommodation. The new accommodation can be either furnished or unfurnished and can be situated out of Suffolk.

You can apply for the Independent Living Payment by downloading the form.

[Ukraine: information for guests - Suffolk County Council](#)

Please send the completed application form and copy of your tenancy agreement to Suffolk County Council at refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk

Suffolk Refugee Support

“Suffolk Refugee Support continue to provide a range of advice, supporting people into employment and training, helping with benefits applications, facilitating access to ESOL classes, visiting community hubs, organising [social events](#) and providing free SIM cards.



If you are a Ukrainian refugee (or a host) in Suffolk and you need support or advice, please contact Suffolk Refugee Support on 01473 400785 or via office@suffolkrefugee.org.uk”

Barnardo’s Refugee Family Helpline

Our Helpline provides emotional and practical support as well as advice and signposting to children and young people seeking sanctuary aged 25 and under (as well as their families). Our Helpline is open from Monday – Friday 10am – 8pm, and Saturday 10am – 3pm. The Helpline can be contacted via free phone on 0808 156 9877 or via an email to RefugeeFamilyHelpline@barnardos.org.uk.

REFUGEE FAMILY HELPLINE

We are here to support children and their families seeking sanctuary in the United Kingdom.

Refugee Family Helpline
Freephone 0808 156 9877

Email RefugeeFamilyHelpline@barnardos.org.uk

The Helpline is open:
Monday to Friday: 10am-8pm
Saturday: 10am-3pm

Please scan QR code to find out more information or visit: helpline.barnardos.org.uk



Our Helpline provides emotional and practical support as well as advice and signposting to children, young people and their families.

All services include access to interpreters if required.



Funded by
UK Government



Barnardo's Registered Charity Nos. 216250 and SC037605 24915shc24

Therapeutic Support Service

Barnardo's are able to offer free therapeutic support to children and young people aged 21 and under living in England under the Ukraine and Afghanistan pathways (ARAP and ACRS). Referrals can be made by contacting the Helpline via email/phone, or by submitting a professional referral form. For further details visit: - [Therapeutic support | Barnardo's Helplines](#)

THERAPEUTIC SUPPORT

Funded by Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities we can offer free therapeutic support to children and young people aged 21 and under on the Ukraine and Afghanistan pathways who are living in England.



For more information contact our Refugee Family Helpline

0808 156 9877

Our lines are open Monday - Friday (10am-8pm) and Saturday (10am-3pm)

RefugeeFamilyHelpline@barnardos.org.uk

Professionals can make a referral via our website helpline.barnardos.org.uk



What is therapy?

What can our therapy service support you with?

Our therapist will listen to you and explore your feelings and experiences in a safe space, without fear of judgement. It is a chance to discuss any difficulty or distress you may be experiencing or have experienced in the past.

They can help you to accept the things that you cannot change and help you to bring about the changes that are possible.

We offer you 8 sessions with the therapist. Each session will last 45 minutes. This will take place virtually (via phone call or video call). We have over 90 therapists who speak over 40 languages.

How can I access this therapy support?

If you would like therapeutic support, you can contact our Helpline service by telephone on our freephone number **0808 156 9877** or you can email RefugeeFamilyHelpline@barnardos.org.uk

When you contact our Helpline our friendly Advisors will listen to you to learn and understand more about your situation.

With your agreement our Advisor will refer you to our therapeutic support service.

The therapist will then make contact with you in within approximately 2-4 weeks at a date and time that is convenient for you to begin sessions.

Whilst you are being supported by our therapy team, you can continue to contact our Helpline Advisors who will be happy to offer you any additional support that you may require.

How do I know if I could benefit from support?

If you are feeling low, lonely, stuck, hopeless, feel like you need someone to talk to or listen to you, then therapy may be for you.

We can support children and young people aged 21 and under who have settled in England on one of the following schemes;
The Homes for Ukraine scheme
Ukraine Family scheme
Ukraine Extension Scheme
Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (Pathways 1, 2 and 3)
Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy



Virtual Youth Space

Youth Space is a safe place for young people from Ukraine and Afghanistan to have fun, make friends and informally practice their English skills. Each session we play games and chat about different topics. Staff from the Refugee Family Helpline lead the sessions, but we also have interpreters available if young people need support with expressing themselves.

Our Ukrainian Youth Space Sessions for 10 – 17-year-olds are held on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month. Young people are welcome to drop in at a time that suits them. If a young person wishes to join the sessions, they can register by visiting - [Virtual Youth Space | Barnardo's Helplines](#)



Upcoming events

Ukrainian Well-being Café

Together for Ipswich is supporting Bridge Church Ipswich in providing a Ukrainian Well-being Café in Ipswich. There will be coffee, cakes, and the opportunity to talk with those who have the compassion, training, and skills to listen. No cost, and no pre-booking required. (Families welcomed).



Location: 'On the Huh' cafe, St Peter's Street, Ipswich IP1 1XF.

Dates: Mondays

Times: 16.00 -19:00 pm

'Pinocchio' Christmas Show

We are grateful to Red Rose Chain theatre for giving the Ukrainian community 23 complimentary tickets for their 'Pinocchio' Christmas Show on 14th December.

Christmas Events

For details of other Christmas events offered by Ipswich Churches contact Alan on 07834 693144.

Advance Notice – Ukrainian Vigil

Plans are on the way to host a Ukrainian Vigil at Ipswich Minster (St Mary-le-Tower Church) during the afternoon of Sunday 23 February.

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Location: 'On the Huh' cafe, St Peter's Street, Ipswich IP1 1XF.

Dates: Mondays

Times: 16.30-18.00 and 19.00-20.30.

Promote your events

We would like to invite you to let us know of any events happening across Suffolk so that we can help promote to them the wider network. If there is any future event you would like to promote, or would like a member of the Homes for Ukraine team to attend, please email refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk using 'Event' in the subject line.



Visa and arrival data as at 1 October 2024

The data below is issued by The Home Office and available at [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

- Total Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme visa applications received: 239,000
- Total Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme visas issued to people: 191,700
- Total arrivals of Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme visa-holders in the UK: 155,900 (Data as of 30th September 2024)
- Total Ukraine permissions to extend stay in the UK: **33,800** (Data as of 1st October 2024)
- Applications to extend permission to stay in the UK under the Ukraine Extension Scheme, and application outcomes as of 1st October 2024:

Scheme	Applications received	Applications granted	Applications awaiting conclusion
UKR Extension Scheme	31,700	25,600	100

Source: Operational data, Home Office (HO), and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

Lower Tier Local Authority	Number of Visa applications	Number of Visas issued	Number of arrivals in the UK by sponsor location
Babergh	307	254	230
East Suffolk	627	541	483
Ipswich	375	268	222
Mid Suffolk	390	327	292
West Suffolk	629	484	416

The below table shows the number of Visas issued by the Home Office via the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship scheme and the number of arrivals, by County (Upper Tier Local Authority) as at 1 October 2024:

Source: Operational data, Home Office (HO), and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

Lower Tier Local Authority	Number of Visa applications	Number of Visas issued	Number of arrivals in the UK by sponsor location
Suffolk	2328	1874	1643
Cambridgeshire	3349	2861	2513
Essex	3767	3093	2705
Norfolk	2576	2085	1812



Could you help a family in need?

In February 2022, the UK was asked to help support Ukrainians displaced by the war. Since then, the people of Suffolk have welcomed more than 1,400 Ukrainian Refugees into their homes.

Unfortunately, the war continues, and we still need hosts to offer a safe place to stay for individuals and families in Suffolk.

Can you help? Homes for Ukraine Suffolk still need safe and secure places in the larger villages and towns, with good access to public transport and amenities. If you can offer a safe place for a Ukrainian guest, please visit [Homes for Ukraine: record your interest](#) to express your interest by completing the online form. Accommodation must be available for at least 6 months and be fit for purpose.

If you sign up to the scheme and all checks are completed, you will be eligible for a monthly 'Thank you' payment.



Would you consider providing a safe home to a displaced person from Ukraine?

USPUK (Universal Sponsorship Pathway UK) is a registered charity and one of the government's [recognised providers](#) for sponsorship under the *Homes for Ukraine* scheme. USPUK's Ukrainian Sponsorship Project has been matching hosts to Ukrainian guests for the last two years. We have supported the resettlement of around 1000 displaced Ukrainians through the *Communities for Ukraine* programme. However, hundreds of Ukrainians still contact us every month looking for hosts, and these numbers are rising due to the deteriorating situation in Ukraine as winter approaches and the war continues.

USPUK's Ukrainian Sponsorship Project team includes native speakers of both English and Ukrainian. We have a rigorous safeguarding process to ensure the safety of both guests and hosts, and we are committed to supporting you in your journey to becoming a host. Further information about our Ukrainian Sponsorship Project can be found on [our website](#), and we initially ask prospective hosts to fill out a [short form](#) to express their interest in hosting. If this is something that could interest you, please get in touch!

**Best wishes,
USPUK team**

Frequently Asked Questions

We know you will have questions about what we are doing in Suffolk to support Ukrainian Refugees and how you can help. [You can find answers to common question on our website](#)

Our [Ukraine: information for hosts](#) is also regularly updated.

Further information, and Frequently Asked Questions about what we are doing in Suffolk to support Ukrainian

Refugees and how you can help, can be found on our website via the following links:

[Support for Ukraine](#)

[Ukraine: information for hosts](#)

[Ukraine: information for guests](#)

[Ukraine: latest news and further information](#)

An information pack for Sponsors in Suffolk, is available on the [Ukraine: information for hosts - Suffolk County Council](#). This pack is currently been updated and contains information about the Homes for Ukraine programme, access to support and health care services, applying for a school place and more. Please check these webpages first.

If you cannot find answers to your questions here, please email refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk and we will endeavour to respond as soon as possible.

Suffolk County Council is committed to protecting your privacy and will treat an individual's personal data in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Legislation.

Your information will not be used for other purposes or supplied to third parties except in accordance with the law. Under the Data Protection Legislation, you have a number of rights regarding any personal data held by us in relation to this project.

See our Homes for Ukraine Scheme privacy notices for full details - [Homes for Ukraine Scheme privacy notice - Suffolk County Council](#)

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