

Solihull Homes for Ukraine



The Homes for Ukraine Scheme has been announced by the government to provide housing and support to Ukrainian Nationals fleeing the war. It will enable individuals and families in the UK to provide accommodation and a route to safety for those forced to leave their homeland.

What to consider before applying to be a host/sponsor

Who's eligible

Individuals are eligible for the scheme if they are a Ukrainian national (or an immediate family member of one) and were a resident in Ukraine prior to 1 January 2022. People arriving under this scheme will be able to:

- Live and work in the UK for up to three years
- Access healthcare, benefits, employment support, education, and English language tuition

Anyone in the UK (of any nationality and any immigration status) is eligible to apply as a sponsor, provided they have at least 6 months' leave to remain in the UK and can provide a document such as a UK passport, Biometric Residence Card or UK-issued photo driving license to confirm their identity. Please see [here](#) for all accepted documentation.

What's required

You must be able to provide a spare room, or separate self-contained accommodation that is unoccupied. A sofa bed will not qualify, as the individual or family will need private space. The accommodation must be fit for people to live in and suitable for the number of people to be accommodated. You will have to undergo housing and safeguarding checks, which are outlined in more detail below.

Accommodation must be available for a **minimum** of 6 months, although it would be preferable for sponsors to have the flexibility to host guests for up to 12 months. Although Ukrainian people on this scheme have access to public funds during their time in the UK, it is unlikely the individual or family will have successfully found employment or be able to afford private rent after 6 months. If you don't want to continue the arrangement for longer than 6 months, you must provide your guest plenty of notice (for example, one month) to make other arrangements. SMBC should be able to provide further support to help them find alternative accommodation.

What to think about (Reset: Communities and Refugees)

Before you commit to sponsoring, it's incredibly important that you think through carefully what this will mean to you and your family.

A person, or family fleeing Ukraine will be living with you for a minimum of 6 months, needing access to a safe place to stay. You might be in a position to offer a self-contained property or a room in your home.

You should consider what having someone to stay for this length of time might mean to you and your family. It's a huge commitment to make.

We recommend that you research the support that is available in your area; through organisations or charities, your friends and neighbours that will be useful when someone arrives. You may need to offer support to access services such as registering with a doctor or setting up a bank account as well as more specialist support.

You can find sources of advice and resources to help inform your decision about whether to participate in Homes for Ukraine via:

- [Refugees At Home](#)
- [Reset: Communities and Refugees](#)
- [Homes for Ukraine scheme: frequently asked questions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain - About the AUGB](#)
- [Sanctuary Foundation](#)

Financial considerations and permissions

You will not be allowed to charge your guest rent but sponsors using the scheme will receive a tax free 'thank you' payment of £350 from the government. This payment will be received monthly for the duration of sponsorship (up to 12 months) and is limited to one payment per residential address.

It's important to consider possible implications on mortgage, tenancy, or lease before agreeing to sponsor a family or individual.

Hosting a Ukrainian family will not affect any Council tax discounts you may be eligible to.

The Association of British Insurers' have announced that for homeowners in the UK housing Ukrainian Nationals, cover will remain the same and there will be no need to inform your insurer. If you are a landlord or a tenant, you will need to contact your insurer.

If you have a mortgage on the property in which you will be hosting the guests, you will need to contact your mortgage lender. The government is currently working with mortgage lenders to standardise and simplify this process.

If you are a tenant, it is important to seek permission from your landlord before applying.

Finding people to sponsor – the matching process

As a sponsor, you can offer your home to specific, named people that you know. If you do not know anyone but still wish to help, charities, religious groups and non-government organisations can put you in contact with a Ukrainian person to sponsor. The government is **not** currently involved in the matching process.

Please do not use social media sites to identify and sponsor refugees. There are charities helping to register and match refugees from Ukraine with sponsors across the UK include the following. The UK government is promoting a number of charities who can help with find matches - [Recognised](#)

[Providers: Organisations who can help guests from Ukraine find sponsors in the UK - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

What to expect once you've applied

As a sponsor, your household will be subject to security and safeguarding checks.

As part of the visa application process, all adults aged 18 and over in your household will be subject to checks against government records and those of other third parties, such as the Police National Computer.

There will be a property inspection to confirm the accommodation you are offering is appropriate and suitable for the number of guests you have staying. The property inspections are conducted by an Environmental Health Officer and are undertaken with reference to the Housing Health and Safety Hazard Rating System [HHSRS] and overcrowding provisions of the Housing Act 2004. You should make sure your home is safe for your guests and ensure that you have a working fire alarm, a carbon monoxide alarm (in any room containing a solid fuel burning appliance) and a safe gas supply. You should also make sure that your guests have access to kitchen and bathroom space.

It is important to consider whether your accommodation is suitable for someone with a young child, people with mobility issues or disabilities. Legally, two people should not be sharing a 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.

If the property is deemed unsuitable, the inspecting officer will confirm any issues in writing and provide recommendations on the work needed to bring the property up to standard that would make it suitable for accommodating Homes for Ukraine guests.

SMBC will complete DBS or enhanced DBS checks (if you are housing children under 18 or vulnerable adults). These checks will need to be done for all members of your household who are aged 16yrs+. If you are hosting a vulnerable adult then officers from Adult Social Care will conduct the enhanced DBS check with you and your household. If you are hosting a child then officers from Children's Services will undertake this process. Basic DBS checks will be completed by the Communities Team.

Preparing for arrivals

You must be in regular contact with your guest prior to their arrival in the UK to help organise and coordinate their arrival. Once you know the arrival date for your guests, please confirm this with SMBC (via refugees@solihull.gov.uk).

Ideally you should be able to meet your guests on arrival and arrange transport to your accommodation. If this is not possible, most public transport operators are offering free onward travel for Ukrainian refugees arriving in the UK. More details about free train travel are available via [National Rail Enquiries - Journey Planner](#). The Council will also provide general reception arrangements and immediate support on arrival, if your guests are arriving at Birmingham Airport.

You will only be expected to provide accommodation to your guests. You are not expected to cover the costs of food and living expenses, although you may want to do this philanthropically. However,

it is important to think about how this will work in practice. If you shop and cook meals as a family, will the guest be expected to have separate space in the fridge and cook separate meals?

You should help your guests adapt to life in the UK by welcoming them and showing them around the area. Solihull Council has arranged for Refugee Action to provide a range of practical support for you and your guests including things like access to benefits, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, school enrolment and admissions. This support will be in place for the duration of your guests' stay.

Once your guests have arrived, a caseworker from Refugee Action will be allocated to them and a welfare check will be undertaken. These checks will be done on a regular basis throughout your guest's stay. As soon as possible after arrival, help will be provided with GP registration and NHS navigation, school enrolment, Universal Credit claims, as well as any necessary referrals to support services.

Next Steps

To register your interest, there is a short form on [Homes for Ukraine](#). After registering your details will be shared with SMBC so we can contact you about participating in the local re-matching process. This will find new sponsors for refugees who have already arrived in Solihull.

If you decide that participating in Homes for Ukraine is not suitable for you and/or your family then there are lots of other ways to support Ukrainian refugees. Details about these can be found via [How you can help Ukraine \(solihull.gov.uk\)](#) and include:

- Donate items that arrivals are in need of;
- Donate money to a charity or the [Disasters Emergency Committee Ukraine Appeal](#). The UK Government is matching pound-for-pound up to £25 million of public donations.
- Give your time as a volunteer – please contact refugees@solihull.gov.uk to express an interest.

If you have any general queries about Homes for Ukraine in Solihull you can e-mail the Council via refugees@solihull.gov.uk

Austin Rodriguez

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Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council