

Welcoming Ukrainian nationals in the UK: Immigration routes and key considerations

We understand that many businesses have Ukrainian staff that they are looking to bring safely to the UK. Or they may be looking to help other Ukrainians who are fleeing from war and are considering whether they can assist with relocation. Of course, this is not as simple as just immigration, other factors like the logistics of leaving Ukraine or travelling onward to the UK, individual circumstances, accommodation, language skills, and critically, emotional wellbeing will form a large part of that decision.

This guide covers immigration considerations and provides an overview of the main routes available for Ukrainian applicants to work in the UK, although working will not always be the key consideration. With the introduction of new schemes and concessions it may be difficult to know which option is best. We hope this summary will help employers to identify a route that not only works but is also the most beneficial for the individual.

	Skilled Worker	Family Scheme	Homes for Ukraine
Who can sponsor?	UK employers holding a valid sponsor licence.	The following UK-based family members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A British national ▶ Those who hold settled status in the UK ▶ Someone from the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland who has pre-settled status and started living in the UK before 1 January 2021 ▶ Someone with refugee status or humanitarian protection in the UK. 	Individuals (phase 1) who will provide suitable accommodation for a minimum of six months which should be a residential spare room or separate self-contained accommodation that is unoccupied. Security and safeguarding checks apply. Due to be extended to charities, businesses and faith and community groups during phase 2 with details yet to be determined. Individuals can be of any nationality, with any immigration status provided they have at least six months' leave to remain in the UK. Individuals and organisations who wish to become sponsors but do not know anyone personally should register online . Individuals will be paired with an applicant.
Visa requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ There must be a genuine UK vacancy which the individual is qualified for. ▶ The role must be at RQF level 3 or higher and usually the salary must be at least £25,600. ▶ The applicant must meet the English language requirement. 	The applicant must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Be applying to join or accompany a UK-based immediate or extended family member sponsor (as above) ▶ Be Ukrainian or the immediate family member of a Ukrainian national who is applying to the scheme. ▶ Have been residing in Ukraine on or immediately before 1 January 2022. No English language threshold or requirement	The applicant must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Have a sponsor under the Homes for Ukraine scheme ▶ Be a Ukrainian national or the immediate family member of a Ukrainian national ▶ Have been residing in Ukraine on or immediately before 1 January 2022. No English language threshold or requirement
Visa duration	Up to 5 years. Extendable and potential eligibility for Indefinite Leave to Remain	Up to 3 years (currently not expected to lead to Indefinite Leave to remain)	Up to 3 years (currently not expected to lead to Indefinite Leave to remain)
Access to employment and benefits?	Can be employed in the role they are being sponsored for. Access to NHS but not public funds.	Access to healthcare, benefits and other support. Work permitted in any role	Access to healthcare, benefits, and other support. Work permitted in any role
Requirement to provide accommodation?	No	No	Yes
Processing times	Applicant must currently attend a biometric appointment (lengthy waits depending on country of application). Processing time approx. 3 weeks from appointment. EU nationals applying from outside the UK may benefit from digital processing that may shorten the process.	Biometrics usually enrolled digitally and applications are automatically prioritised	Biometrics usually enrolled digitally and applications are automatically prioritised
Costs	Government fees of £6,500 to £11,000 depending on company size and whether there is an existing sponsor licence in place.	No government fees payable.	No government fees payable.
Most suitable for	Companies with defined skilled roles for specific individuals whose primary goal is to work in the UK and may not fit the Ukraine Family Scheme or Homes for Ukraine	Ukrainian nationals and their families with extended family in the UK	Individuals/Groups who wish to provide accommodation to Ukrainian nationals

Right to work

All employers must check an employee's right to work in the UK before they start. For Ukrainian nationals applying under the Skilled Worker, Family or Homes for Ukraine Schemes, you can [check their right to work online](#) once their visa has been issued. For those not holding an e-visa or yet in possession of their BRP, you can conduct a check on their entry stamp or vignette.

Other considerations

Employers who look to assist with those impacted by the crisis in Ukraine through any of the above routes will be aware that immigration considerations make up one part of a much wider set of issues for which those relocating will require support. Arranging transport, potential language barriers, obtaining a bank account, accessing medical care, childcare and schooling, obtaining an NI number and professional support for emotional wellbeing will all be top priorities. But immigration considerations can provide some security and access to critical infrastructure to help people establish themselves outside of Ukraine.

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