



SUFFOLK UKRAINE BULLETIN

Dear all,

Welcome to the Suffolk Homes for Ukraine Bulletin. Here we will share updates about the Homes for Ukraine Scheme in Suffolk, provide reminders about where to access support and let you know about events happening locally. Suffolk County Council will use this bulletin to keep you updated on government announcements about any changes to the scheme.

We are grateful for your continued support to Ukrainian guests and your ongoing commitment to helping those who are fleeing conflict.

The next bulletin will be on Wednesday 8th April 2026. [You can read previous editions of the Suffolk Ukraine Bulletin on our website](#)

With best wishes, on behalf of Suffolk's Ukraine Task Group.

Councillor Nadia Cenci,
Suffolk County Council Cabinet Member for Equality and Communities

Stuart Keeble,
Director of Public Health and Communities in Suffolk



SUFFOLK'S RESPONSE



Suffolk Homes For Ukraine Team Supports Samaritan Purse - Operation Christmas Child

The Homes for Ukraine Team at Suffolk County Council decided that instead of giving cards and gifts to each other for Christmas we would participate in Operation Christmas Child. We were able to fill four shoe boxes, to give to children.

Operation Christmas Child is a project of Samaritan's Purse. It is a hands-on way to bless children in need across the world by filling shoeboxes with toys, personal care items, school supplies, and fun gifts.

The mission of Operation Christmas Child is to demonstrate our love in a tangible way to children in need around the world. We know that our shoeboxes bought joy to children who received them at Christmas.

Seasonal Winter 'Thank you' payment.

Suffolk County Council is offering a one-off additional payment of £350 to all hosts who are accommodating Ukrainian guests in January 2026, 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

2026 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, advising they will receive the payment 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 Seasonal Winter Thank you payment, please contact refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk by 3rd February 2026.



English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes launched

Suffolk ESOL Hub has been launched in Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket. Across the two venues, ESOL learners will be able to access free lessons.

Available levels:

Pre-Entry / Entry 1 - (Stowmarket) - The Mix - 127 Ipswich St, Stowmarket IP14 1BB

Entry 1 / Entry 2 - (Bury St Edmunds) - Quaker Rooms - Saint John's St, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1SJ

Entry 3 / Level 1 - (Bury St Edmunds) - Quaker Rooms - Saint John's St, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1SJ

Who can join:

Anyone who is a refugee or forced migrant living in Suffolk and aged over 19

To sign up [click here](#)

Looking to the Future – Supporting your guests into independent living

To support guests still in sponsorship as they transition to living independently, the government have extended thank you payments for 18 months of the Ukraine Permission Extension (UPE) scheme at a rate of £350 a month.

We know things are difficult for many households and, while you cannot be charging your guests rent and receive Thank You payments, you may decide to ask your adult guests to contribute something reasonable towards household bills.

All Ukrainian adults arriving under the Homes for Ukraine scheme and holders of UPE visas are eligible to work here and have the right to receive benefits while they are in the UK.

We encourage you to have a conversation with your guest/s about their next steps and work with them to develop a plan for their future.

If you would like to continue to support your guests in the long term, you could move to a more formal arrangement, for example, by renting a room in your home through the Government's 'Rent a Room' scheme. Or you may wish to rent another property that you own to your guest.

This would mean that you may need to become a landlord, which could require you to take on more responsibilities, and if you charge rent you won't be entitled to claim a Thank You payment as well.

Your rights and responsibilities could be different depending on whether the guest remains living in your property or moves into another property you own. Information on what this means is available on GOV.UK and in the 'How to Let' in England guide - [How to rent: the checklist for renting in England - GOV.UK](#) please also see below: -

Rent a room in your home - [Rent a room in your home: Becoming a resident landlord - GOV.UK](#)

Renting out your property - [Renting out your property: Landlord responsibilities - GOV.UK](#)

You can also find helpful information about housing in the UK on OPORA's website

- [Opora - Housing in the UK.](#)

OPORA is a registered UK charity supporting Ukrainians in rebuilding their lives sustainably in the UK. They provide Ukrainian language information, support and emergency assistance.

If you would like to discuss your options with one of our case workers, please email: - refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk

Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme – (UPES): A Guide for Ukrainians in the UK

The UK Government has introduced the Ukraine Permission Extension scheme (UPES). The scheme allows people currently living in the UK under an existing Ukraine Visa scheme to apply to extend their stay in the UK for a further 18 months when their valid Ukrainian visa expires.

The Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme (UPES) **is now open for applications.**

It is free to apply for the UPE scheme, and if an application is successful, your guests will be able to continue to live, work and study in the UK and access public funds.

It is important that your guests actively apply to extend their visa. (Please note – visas will NOT be extended automatically)

How and when to apply?

- Your guests should submit an application when they have 28 days or less left on their current permission.
- If your guest applies too early, their application may be rejected and would then need to reapply when their current permission has 28 days or less remaining.
- If your guest doesn't know the date when their current leave to remain ends, they can sign into their [UKVI account](#) to find out or refer to their permission letter to verify the visa's expiry date.
- Applications can only be submitted while your guests are physically present in the UK.

- To get more information about how to apply for an extension, follow the instructions provided on the official UK government website [Applying to the Ukraine Permission Extension scheme - GOV.UK](#)

Please note

- Your guests should not leave the UK while their UPE application is being processed. Leaving the country will result in the cancellation of an application.
- Transitioning to an e-Visa is not the same as extending a visa under the UPE.

If your guest has any questions about the change to their current visa, UPE or immigration status, they should contact, [GOV.UK website](#), [UKVI](#) or a registered [immigration adviser](#).

Here are a few organisations that may be able to assist with your guests UPE application

HS-Legal - may be able to provide immigration support - Phone: 01206 500 181, WhatsApp- 07404 451 881 - Email: info@hs-legal.co.uk

Settled is a charity that provides immigration advice to Ukrainians who are already in the UK and need support. You can contact them via email ukraineadvice@settled.org.uk

Gyros - offers advice & guidance on a range of issues including but not limited to: - Immigration Advice (OISC Level 2 accredited) Website - <http://www.gyros.org.uk/>

Host Thank You Payments – Ukraine Permission Extension scheme

To support guests still in sponsorship as they transition to living independently, the government have extended thank you payments for 18 months of the Ukraine Permission Extension (UPE) scheme at a rate of £350 a month.

When your guest(s) Homes for Ukraine permission expiry is reached, a new claim form and declaration for the Ukraine Permission Extension scheme will be sent to the lead host.

Please complete and submit this form if you wish to receive thank you payments.

Payments for eligible UPE claims will be at the government rate of £350 per month. Please note - SCC will NOT be providing an uplift to the government flat rate.

See our website for further information about Ukraine Permission Extension scheme host thank you payments [Ukraine: information for hosts - Suffolk County Council](#)

Independent Living Payment

Suffolk County Council is offering a one-off Independent Living Payment (ILP) of £2,000 to Homes for Ukraine guests who are leaving their host accommodation and moving into their own home. 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 outside of Suffolk.

Your guest(s) can apply for the Independent Living Payment by downloading the form.

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

Please ask your guest(s) to send the completed application form and copy of their tenancy agreement to Suffolk County Council at refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk



Council Tax Exemption– Ukraine Permission Extension

Ukraine Permission Extension Visa Holders are disregarded for the purpose of council tax **only** if they live in accommodation provided by a sponsor/host who is entitled to thank you payments under Ukraine Permission Extension, and they previously held a Homes for Ukraine visa.

Please note if your guest(s) have extended their visas under the Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme and are moving into independent accommodation they will no

longer be exempted from paying Council Tax.

For further information please see updated guidance - [Work and benefits: Homes for Ukraine - GOV.UK](#)

Other Exemptions and Disregards under Ukraine Permission Extension

Income Tax: Thank you payments made in respect of UPE guests will continue to be disregarded from income tax calculations.

Benefits: Thank you payments made in respect of UPE guests will continue to be disregarded from benefits calculations.

Property tax: Annual Tax on Enveloped Dwelling (ATED): Those hosting UPE guests in a dwelling normally subject to ATED will continue to be exempt.

Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT): Those hosting UPE guests will continue to benefit from relief from the 15% stamp duty rate, which is usually payable on properties owned by a company, a partnership with corporate members, or a collective investment scheme.

Homes for Ukraine - Eligibility, Safeguarding, Disclosure and Barring Service and accommodation checks

Information about **not** meeting the requirements to sponsor a guest, has been updated.

Find updated information here:

[Eligibility, safeguarding, Disclosure and Barring Service and accommodation checks: Homes for Ukraine - GOV.UK](#)

Second Homes for Ukraine Visas

The Ukraine Permission Extension (UPE) is an in-country visa route: Those who wish to apply can only do so from the UK and must stay in the UK whilst awaiting a decision.

Homes For Ukraine visa holders who need to leave the UK for an emergency or work reasons cannot apply to UPE. They are however eligible to apply for a second Homes For Ukraine visa.

Any Homes For Ukraine visa holder could apply for a second visa. This will be granted if the immigration conditions are met, including having an approved Sponsor.

The eligibility criteria are outlined here:- [Apply for a visa under the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme - GOV.UK](#)

E-Visa Update

If your guest makes a successful application to travel to the UK after 30 October 2025, guests may not be issued with a vignette. Instead, they will need to access their e-Visa through their UKVI account to see the permission they have been granted before they travel to the UK.

For information, from 1 September 2025, charities and voluntary organisations across the UK are being funded to provide free help and information to vulnerable people who need to create a UKVI account and access their e-Visa that may assist guests who are in the UK. For more information, and a list of participating organisations, please visit: [e-Visa: community support for vulnerable people - GOV.UK](#).

Aligning a child's Ukraine Permission Extension (UPE) with a parent or legal guardian

Since the launch of UPE, children who apply with their parent will have their period of permission aligned to their parent. As of 11 November 2025, the immigration rules were changed so that a child's permission may also be aligned to that of a legal guardian. The adult (parent or legal guardian) must be in the UK for a child's permission to be aligned. For further information, please see section 5 - [Explanatory memorandum to the statement of changes to the Immigration Rules: HC 1333, 14 October 2025 \(accessible\) - GOV.UK](#).

UK museums are rethinking their approaches to Ukrainian cultural heritage

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has brought a sharper focus on the long-standing historical forces that have sought to marginalise, overwrite, or appropriate Ukrainian identity.

The assaults on historic cities, museums, archives, and sacred sites have put renewed attention on persistent patterns of erasure or appropriation.

This moment has also increased awareness of how inherited narratives, older hierarchies and unquestioned assumptions have shaped our understanding and interpretation of collections from Ukraine and Eastern Europe more broadly.

This re-examination is happening in the context of a wider shift within the UK museum sector, driven in part by decolonial approaches that challenge established interpretive hierarchies and highlight the political forces embedded in museum practice.

See full article here:

[UK museums are rethinking their approaches to Ukrainian cultural heritage - Museums Association](#)

By Evgeniya Ravtsova

International programmes manager, Victoria and Albert Museum



Suffolk Refugee Support



Suffolk Refugee Support continues to provide a range of advice, supporting people into employment and training, helping with benefit 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.



OPORA

OPORA is a registered UK charity supporting Ukrainians in rebuilding their lives sustainably in the UK. They provide Ukrainians with language information, support and emergency assistance.

You can also find helpful information about housing in the UK on OPORA's website [Opora](#)

- Housing in the UK.

Training

Supporting Refugees with Disabilities: An Introduction

If you're welcoming a family with known disabilities and have little to no experience working with individuals with disabilities, this course is for you. It offers a clear overview of inclusion, helping you build confidence and navigate this important area with greater understanding and empathy.

How will this course work

This is a self-paced e-learning course that you can complete in your own time. The e-learning platform is designed to be simple, clear, and easy to follow, even if you're not tech-savvy.

Who is this course for?

For hosts who would like to learn more about supporting refugees with disabilities.

Aims of this course:

- Understand disability as a category
- Explore top tips for effectively supporting people with disabilities
- Identify strategies to promote inclusivity
- Examine the intersection of culture and disability
- Learn about disability rights and benefits for refugees in the UK

Please follow the link to register - [Supporting refugees with disabilities](#)

Introduction to Community Sponsorship

This short session is designed to help you understand what community sponsorship is, how it works, and where you might fit in. It will take around 15 minutes to complete.

There are seven short sections of text along with three short animations that help explain different aspects of Community Sponsorship.

Please follow the link to register: - [Introduction to Community Sponsorship](#)

Supporting Refugee Students – Higher Education

If you're welcoming or hosting a family who may be interested in accessing Higher Education, then this e-learning course can support you in that journey.

Within this e-learning, there will be an overview about choosing the right university and course, how to apply, including eligibility criteria and information on applying for student finance.

You will also look into some of the possible challenges and barriers to accessing and thriving at Higher Education in the UK.

How will this course work

This is a self-paced e-learning course that you can complete in your own time. You're in control—revisit sections as many times as you like, until it all clicks.

Aims of this course

- Selecting the right university and course
- Navigating the university application process
- Understanding eligibility and applying for Student Finance
- Overcoming challenges and thriving during university life
- Identifying sources of support and guidance throughout the university journey

Please follow the link to register - [Training - Supporting Refugee Students – Higher Education - Reset Communities for Refugees](#)

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: 10:00am -12:00pm (during school term only)

Budget Workshop (held monthly)

Please contact Anglia Care Trust for dates and times

Phone: 01473 622888

Email: admin@angliacaretrust.org.uk

STEP (Specialist Training and Employment Programme)



STEP (Specialist Training and Employment Programme) is a free programme run by World Jewish Relief, offering personalised employment support and high-quality English classes to refugees and forced migrants in the UK.

Due to the continued success and high demand for their services, the World Jewish Relief will be continuing to offer STEP to Ukrainians.

Their English classes will be delivered by the British Council, and the programme remains completely free for eligible refugees and forced migrants across the UK. All the information is available on their website.

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

BARNARDOS

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

 **Funded by UK Government**

 **BARNARDOS**
Changing childhoods.
Changing lives.

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

 **Funded by UK Government**

 **BARNARDOS**
Changing childhoods.
Changing lives.

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: 16.30-18.00 and 19.00-20.30



Ipswich Vigil for Ukraine

This will be the sixth Ipswich Vigil for Ukraine since February 2022. We always pray that it will be the last, but again this February we welcome people of all faiths and none, and of all nationalities, to stand, to walk, and to pray together for a just and lasting peace in Ukraine. As the flier says, it is for lament, for prayer, for solidarity - for resilience, unity, wisdom and healing.

Together with the annual SRS-promoted Ukrainian Independence Day event in August, the Ipswich Vigil for Ukraine is one of most high profile and purposeful opportunities for us to press for a peaceful and sustainable outcome. Our Ukrainian friends really appreciate it, please do your best to be there.

Alan Cutting – Head the Ukraine response for Together for Ipswich

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.



WELCOMING UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

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](#)
- [Information for Sponsors](#)
- [Information for Guests](#)
- [Further information](#)

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



HOW YOU CAN HELP

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 1,700 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.



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.
