

A banner with a blue top half and a yellow bottom half, separated by a wavy line. The text 'SUFFOLK' is in white on the blue background, and 'UKRAINE BULLETIN' is in blue on the yellow background. A faint sunburst graphic is visible on the right side of the yellow section.

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 14th January 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 Communities**

**Stuart Keeble,
Director of Public Health and Communities in Suffolk**



Host Thank You Payments – Guests with Homes for Ukraine Permission

Effective 1st April 2025 host thank you payments provided by the UK Government will be at a reduced flat rate of £350, irrespective of the length of time your guest(s) have been in the UK.

Please see the published government guidance for sponsors for further information explaining this change [Becoming a sponsor: Homes for Ukraine - GOV.UK](#)

Suffolk County Council will fund an increase to the rate of the government monthly thank you payment of £25. Therefore, the standard payment rate to all eligible hosts will be £375.

We will also uplift with an additional £150 per month once hosts have been hosting their guest(s) at the property for at least 6 months, making a total monthly payment of £525.

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

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

Suffolk partners with Ukrainian region of Poltava



Suffolk County Council has signed a new partnership with the Poltava Regional Military Administration in Ukraine, rooted in friendship, shared values and a commitment to long-term cooperation.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on the 15th October at the XR Lab at West Suffolk College in Bury St Edmunds by Councillor Matthew Hicks, Leader of Suffolk County Council, and Volodymyr Kohut, Head of the Poltava Administration.

[Read more about the partnership with the Poltava region.](#)

Homes for Ukraine Bulletin Survey

The Homes for Ukraine Team recently carried out a review of the Homes for Ukraine Bulletin to determine whether the Bulletin remains relevant in its current format, and to identify potential areas for improvement.

Recommendations

Given that **98% of respondents** read and wish to continue receiving the Bulletin, it is recommended that communication with hosts continues. Considering the team's capacity, the following actions were suggested and agreed.

- Transition from a bi-monthly to a quarterly Bulletin.
- Important updates that need be communicated in a timely manner will be sent to hosts by email.
- We will remove visa data and numbers, as these have not been updated on Gov.uk for several months.

- We will incorporate new topics as suggested in the survey responses to enhance relevance and engagement.
 - We will promote the Bulletin on our Facebook page and direct to the Suffolk Homes for Ukraine Website.
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Accessing School Transport

Suffolk County Council (SCC) funded school travel is provided to the nearest suitable school that would have had a place available for a child when they are:

- a. aged under 8 and live more than two miles from the school.
- b. aged 8 or older and live more than three miles from the school.

This would be whether or not an application was made for a place at that school. The distance in a) and b) above is called the statutory walking distance.

Please note:

- SCC will only provide funded school travel to the child's catchment area school when it is the nearest suitable school to their home that would have had a place available for them, and they meet the distance criteria.
- School Preferences and the order in which they are put on the admissions application could affect the child's eligibility for SCC funded school travel.
- If SCC funded school travel is important to your guests, you should encourage them to apply for their child's three nearest schools in the order they appear on the Nearest School Checker - [Nearest School Checker - Suffolk County Council](#)
- If they wish to apply for funded school travel, they will need to complete an opt-in application for their child [via Suffolk on Board - School Travel / Opt-in \(apply\)](#)

More information is available on [the school places page](#). Full details of the School Travel Policy can be found on the [Suffolk on Board website](#)



NATIONAL UPDATES

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](#)



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.

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](#)

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



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

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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



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

Suffolk County Council supported event

Suffolk's Ukrainians mark Independence Day at The Hold in Fore Street in Ipswich



Ukrainians brought a taste of their culture to Suffolk's county town as they celebrated their Independence Day with music, food and arts and crafts.

The Ukrainian community in Suffolk held their second celebration with an event at the Hold in Fore Street, home of the Suffolk Archives and invited people to join in the celebrations.

About 150 people enjoyed a concert programme, poetry reading and a speech from a British volunteer about his trips to Ukraine, which continues to fight a war against Russia, following an invasion by its armed forces in February 2022.

There was also the opportunity to try Ukrainian food, snacks, sweets and dumplings, as well as arts and crafts, including a workshop on the Ukrainian way of painting.

An exhibition was held of Ukrainian artists, businessmen and women, who shared their paintings and crafts, along with crochet toys.

Rita Fadieieva, Ukraine programme support coordinator and advice worker at Suffolk Refugee Support, said: "It was a nice opportunity for people to get together and for communities not just in Ipswich, but from Woodbridge and Felixstowe to be present."



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.



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.
