

Digital Welcome Pack (Homes for Ukraine)

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1 Welcome to Scotland and Aberdeenshire

The Aberdeenshire Council Refugee Resettlement Team will assist Ukrainian families and Sponsors with any questions you have about settling into Aberdeenshire. We know that leaving Ukraine, family and friends is difficult and we are here to help.

You can contact us on: rrt@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Useful links to learn about Scotland and Aberdeenshire:

<https://www.scotland.org/about-scotland/facts>

<https://www.aberdeenshirecommunitysafety.org.uk/download/welcome/english.pdf>

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/communities-and-events/refugees/>

<https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/information-for-people-in-scotland-affected-by-the-crisis-in-ukraine/>

2 Immigration

You have been granted a Visa to remain in the UK for 3 years. You will be able to work and access benefits and public services – including healthcare, benefits and schooling. If you have any questions about your visa or immigration status, you must speak with a qualified immigration advisor:

<https://www.justrightscotland.org.uk/what-we-do/migrant-refugee-rights/ukraine-advice-scotland/>

BRP – If not done already, you should apply for a BRP card to remain in the UK for 3 years.

To apply for your BRP card you should make an appointment - <https://apply.visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/ukraine-scheme-brp>

If you have already applied for your card and need to have it re-directed, you can email – poukr@homeoffice.gov.uk – Please provide your email address, your name, date of birth, boarding card or travel itinerary and passport number.

3 Money Advice

You will receive £200 per person on arrival to help with living costs until your benefits are in place. Your first priority will be to apply for Universal Credit or Pension Credit. It usually takes 5 weeks to get your first payment, but you can apply for an advance if need be.

- Universal Credit- a payment for those of working age, to help with living costs if you 're on a low income, out of work or you cannot work.
<https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>
- Pension Credit- a payment to help with your living costs if you are over the age of 66 years and on a low income. Before you can apply for Pension Credit you must first contact the Pension Service on 0800 731 0469
www.gov.uk/contact-pension-service
<https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit>
- Child Benefit- You get Child Benefit if you're responsible for bringing up a child who is under 16 or under 20 if they stay in approved education or training. Only one person can get Child Benefit for a child. There's no limit to how many children you can claim for. To make a claim for the first time you must complete a paper claim form. When you send your claim form, you must either include your child's original birth certificate and passport or travel document used to enter the UK or to avoid sending originals the Job Centre can make certified copies for you.
<https://www.gov.uk/child-benefit>
- Scottish Child Payment- A weekly payment of £25 that you can get for every child you look after who's under 16 years of age.
<https://www.mygov.scot/scottish-child-payment>
- Best Start Payments- The payments you can get now will depend on how far along in your pregnancy you are or how old your child is.
Best Start grants- are 3 one-off payments that help towards the costs of being pregnant or looking after a child
1-Pregnancy and Baby Payment, 2-Early Learning Payment 3-School Age Payment
Best Start Foods- is a prepaid card that can be used in shops or online to buy healthy foods like milk or fruit.
<https://www.mygov.scot/best-start-grant-best-start-foods>
- Free School Meals- All children at local council schools can get free school meals during term-time in primary 1 to 5, your family's financial circumstances do not matter. Children are also eligible for free school meals if their parents or carers are in receipt of a qualifying benefit such as Universal Credit.

You can apply for free school meals on your local council's website. If you qualify for free school meals Aberdeenshire Council will automatically award a school clothing grant.

www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/school-info/assistance/free-school-meals/

- School Clothing Grants- The school clothing grant is only available to children in full time education. You cannot apply for a school clothing grant for children attending nursery school. You can apply for a school clothing grant if you or your family are on

a low income. If you qualify for a school clothing grant you will automatically be awarded free school meals entitlement.

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/school-info/assistance/school-clothing-grants/>

- National Entitlement Card- Scotland-wide free bus travel for young people aged 22 and under, over 60s and disabled people.

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/public-transport/concessionary-travel/>

- Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)- is an allowance of £30 per week, which can be paid to eligible students who stay on in education after the age of 16 years. Household income is assessed for EMA purposes.

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/school-info/assistance/ema/>

National Insurance Number (NINO) – you should be issued with a NINO when you apply for Universal Credit. If this doesn't happen, you can apply for one here

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number/how-to-apply>

Documents can be verified by the Job centre to save having to send originals.

A bank account in the name of the applicant is required for Universal Credit and benefit claims. Your sponsor may be able to introduce you to their bank. Alternatively, an online bank account can be opened.

Other Useful links:

Aberdeenshire Council Money Advice, Benefits and Grants

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/benefits-and-grants/>

Scottish Government <https://www.mygov.scot/browse/benefits>

Citizens Advice Scotland <https://www.cas.org.uk/>

Ukraine Advice Scotland <https://www.justrightscotland.org.uk/what-we-do/migrant-refugee-rights/ukraine-advice-scotland/>

4 Health and Wellbeing

On arrival, our Health Assessment Team will contact you to carry out a medical health assessment. Please mention any medication you are currently taking or require.

On arrival, your Sponsor will help you register with your local GP Practice. In Scotland, all health appointments and prescriptions are free. Should you need to make an appointment with the GP you should ask for an interpreter and make a longer appointment if necessary. The National Health Service (NHS) is under pressure due to the impacts of Covid 19, so you may have to wait for an appointment <https://www.know-who-to-turn-to.com/>

There is a central call number available for people to access help and advice in relation to dental emergencies and dental registration, with a team of qualified dental nurses who will respond to these queries/issues. The team can be contacted on 0345 4565 990 between 8.05am and 6.00pm. They can provide details of dental practices who are accepting new patients within Aberdeenshire.

Covid information in Ukrainian: <http://www.healthscotland.com/documents/78277.aspx>

It may find it hard to adjust to life in Scotland and you will have a range of difficult emotions to deal with. If you feel unwell, depressed or anxious you should speak with your GP.

Please let us know if we can help. Wellbeing Scotland has some resources that may also help: <https://www.wellbeingScotland.org/>

Free period products. Fill in your details to receive 2 months' worth of free period products. <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/communities-and-events/sanitary-products/>

5 Education & Language Learning

Scotland provides free school education for all children from the age of 4 or 5 up to age 18. Young children attend primary school and older children go to secondary school. Where children need additional support to help them learn, this is provided by the school. For example, your child will get extra support if they speak little or no English, or if they have a health condition which affects how they learn. This support is a right and is set out in law. Most children with additional support needs will be educated in their local mainstream school but in some cases another school may be better equipped to meet their needs.

<https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/Documents/refugee-schools-guide.pdf>

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/>

Your sponsor will help you enrol your child in school and your Resettlement Officer will signpost you to any help needed.

Funded early learning and childcare is free to parents. All 3 and 4 year olds are eligible to get a funded place at a council nursery, or funding towards a place at a funded provider (private nurseries, playgroups and childminders that we have an agreement with). Some children younger than age 3 may also be eligible. If you need help applying to nursery, contact Myra McRobbie, Early Years Team on earlyyears@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/childcare-and-early-learning/>

Colleges and Universities provide a range of educational opportunities for those aged 16 and above. Funding may be available, but you would need to check eligibility with the institution. If you need advice on college or university applications, speak directly with the institution or ask for a referral to our New Scots Employability Worker.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes are available in person and online, but you may need to travel to access them. ESOL classes are delivered in the community and at college. On arrival you will be offered an ESOL assessment. Once assessed you will be advised of your English language levels and classes and courses available. College terms run from August to June so you may have to wait until a new term starts. Great tips to learn English include watching television, listening to the radio and practicing conversational English with your host.

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/communities-and-events/cld/adult-learning/english-of-other-languages/>

6 Housing

Your Sponsor has agreed to accommodate you for a minimum of 6 to 12 months. They will receive a thank you payment to cover their costs so you are not expected to pay rent. After

6 months, you and your Sponsor will need to discuss if your arrangement will continue. If you or your Sponsor decide to end your accommodation arrangement, you can contact the Housing Service for advice (this is a free service):

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/housing/housing-options/>

There is a dedicated team who can advise and assist you in applying for a home. The resettlement team can refer you to them.

7 Employment

When you apply for Universal Credit there will be an expectation that you will look for employment, training or volunteering. If you are the lead carer for a child, what is expected of you will be based on the age of the youngest child in your household. You will be appointed a Work Coach by the Jobcentre but you can also seek advice and support from one of our New Scots Employability Workers. The support they can provide ranges from writing a professional CV and covering letter, identifying transferable skills, understanding the local job market, finding jobs, completing job applications, practice job interviews, and getting overseas qualifications recognised in the UK. If you are considering retraining in a new field of work, they can provide advice on appropriate training/courses. They can also advise on local volunteering opportunities which can be an excellent way of adjusting, building confidence and learning language and skills.

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/jobs-and-careers/employability-support/employment-support-team/>

employmentsupportteam@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

8 Community

Aberdeenshire has a wide range of communities from all around the world who are ready to help. We can help connect you with Aberdeenshire residents who speak Ukrainian and Russian and want to help you settle into Scotland. The Ukraine Aberdeenshire WhatsApp Group will be an essential source of support, guidance and reassurance in difficult times. Local communities will also want to help you in any way they can – your Sponsor will introduce you to your new neighbours.

If you've arrived without essential items like clothing and toiletries, your Resettlement Officer can refer you to the Community Link Worker Service for support.

Scotland Supporting Ukraine <https://www.facebook.com/scotlandsupportingukraine>

Scotland Supporting Ukraine organises local welcome hubs for Ukrainians:

Ellon - fortnightly - Tolbooth Fridays 7-9pm

Methlick - weekly - Ythanview Hotel Wednesdays 7-9pm

Peterhead - weekly - Peterhead Church of Christ - Fridays 5-7pm

Banchory - weekly - Saturdays 10-12pm

Stonehaven - weekly - Fridays St James Episcopal Church 6-8pm

Fraserburgh - weekly - Wednesdays 10-12pm.

Your Resettlement Officer will give you contact details.

Ukrainians Aberdeenshire is a Whatsapp group that you can join to receive useful information from the Council and to contact other Ukrainians living here.

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/Euxkg17SPQrE7ztL25BSwk>

9 Safety and Stability

In case of an emergency – police, fire or ambulance, call 999

111 - the 111 service provides urgent care triage if you think you need A&E but it's not life-threatening, and advice when your GP, pharmacy or dental practice is closed.

Police Scotland have produced a Guide to Scots' law to help you adjust to life in Scotland.

<https://refugeesaberdeenshire.wordpress.com/2022/03/28/a-guide-to-scots-law-ukrainian/>

https://refugeesaberdeenshire.wordpress.com/2022/04/01/a-guide-to-scots-law-russian

Driving in the UK <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/move-to-the-uk-if-youre-from-ukraine#driving-in-the-uk>

10 Sponsors

Anyone in the UK with a spare room, or separate self-contained accommodation that is unoccupied can become a **Homes for Ukraine** Sponsor. Accommodation must be available for at least 6 months, be fit for people to live in, and suitable for the number of people being accommodated.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-sponsor-guidance>

The Government pay Sponsors a monthly 'thank you' payment. Sponsors must not charge families rent. You will continue to receive payments for as long as you sponsor somebody and for up to 2 years. The payment will be made in arrears and eligibility checks will be carried out which will include a visit to your home, prior to payment. Aberdeenshire Council will ask you to complete a form to allow payments to be set up.

Sponsors are required to provide warm and comfortable accommodation but not meals, however, there is nothing stopping sponsors offering meals should they wish. Sponsors are not required to cover the costs of food and living expenses (although you may wish to offer this philanthropically). Sponsors should not expect their guest to carry out any unpaid work.

Families arriving will have met standard security checks against the police national computer database and antiterrorism checks as part of their visa application process. Sponsors and all adults in the sponsor household will also be subject to standard security checks as part of the visa process. Aberdeenshire Council will also check that the accommodation you are offering is appropriate and that everything is in place for your guest(s). We will also conduct a safeguarding and Disclosure Scotland check on all adults over 16 in your household. These checks and the process will be expedited. For those who are sponsoring a Ukrainian family which includes a child or a vulnerable adult, we will require an Enhanced Disclosure.

Council tax discounts and Housing Benefit will not be affected if you sponsor and host a Ukrainian family in your home. If you rent your property, you will need to check with your

landlord, freeholder or mortgage provider, and insurance company, about whether they have any policies which you need to factor in.

Sponsors are committed to hosting families for a minimum of 6 months, but you may choose to continue beyond the initial six months if you and your guest wish to do so. If you don't want to continue the arrangement beyond six months, you should let your family know at least one month before, so they can seek advice on housing.

Sponsors are required to:

- agree to an enhanced Disclosure Scotland check, this includes an ID check
- agree to a home visit undertaken by a local authority officer/contractor in order to assess the suitability of the accommodation offered if required
- check their mortgage lenders website for further guidance or seek the agreement of their landlord if they are a tenant
- notify their insurer that they will be hosting guests prior to their arrival
- provide suitable accommodation for a minimum of 6 months
- support and help guests to adapt to life in the UK, initially checking if they have enough food and supplies such as toiletries, along with checking if they have access to a mobile phone and internet to stay in touch with family members
- help direct their guests to public services, for example, registering with a GP or NHS dentist.

Families fleeing war and seeking sanctuary will be traumatised. Being forcibly separated from loved ones, friends, community and country will be challenging for everyone involved. Families still in Ukraine will be at risk of injury and death so anxiety levels will be high. People will need space, Wi-Fi to stay in touch, patience and understanding. Aberdeenshire Council has resettled refugees from war and conflict zones for the last 6 years so we have experience and supports in place to help you, but this will be very different and new to all of us, so we will all need patience to learn and develop supports together.

Finally, some messages of welcome and reassurance from Ukrainians living in Aberdeenshire

"When the decision is made, it seems that you are going into the unknown. But when you get to Scotland, you immediately feel the support of people you did not know before" (Lilia, Ukraine)

"Being in Aberdeenshire, I realized that I was not left alone with my problems. Any unexpected issues that arise in the process of life are resolved here, and the support of specialists is priceless." (Dmitry, Ukraine)

"Moving to Scotland, I was very worried about the education of my children: a new language, new teachers, a new children's team. Feelings were redundant. A warm welcome in the elementary and middle schools very quickly rebuilt the children to the new education system" (Anna, Ukraine)



rrt@aberdeenshire.gov.uk