

# Digital Welcome Pack (Ukraine Family Visa Route)

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## **1 Welcome to Scotland and Aberdeenshire**

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

You can contact us on: [refugeeresettlementteam@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:refugeeresettlementteam@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/>

## **3 Money Advice**

Your first priority will be to apply for Universal Credit or Pension Credit. Universal Credit takes 5 weeks to process but you can apply for an advance.

- Universal Credit <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>
- Pension Credit <https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit>
- Child Benefit <https://www.gov.uk/child-benefit>
- Scottish Child Payment <https://www.mygov.scot/scottish-child-payment>
- School Clothing Grants <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/school-info/assistance/school-clothing-grants/>

*Useful links:*

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

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

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

A bank account in the name of the applicant is required for Universal Credit and benefit claims. Your family may be able to introduce you to their bank. The Bank of Scotland can be flexible with ID requirements for applicants with refugee status.

#### **4 Health and Wellbeing**

On arrival, your family will help you register with your local GP Practice. In Scotland, all health appointments and prescriptions are free. 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/>

#### **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 family will help you enrol your child in school.

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 the Early Years Team on [earlyyears@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto: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.

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 family has agreed to accommodate you as part of your visa application. If you or your family decide to end your accommodation arrangement, you can contact the Housing Service for advice:

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

## **7 Employment**

When you arrive it will take to adjust and settle. When you apply for Universal Credit, there will be an expectation that you will look for employment, training or volunteering when you and your Work Coach think you are ready. You will be appointed a Work Coach by the Jobcentre but you can also seek advice and support from our New Scots Employability Worker. Volunteering can be an excellent way of adjusting, building confidence and learning language and skills. If you care for someone or have young children, you will not be expected to work.

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

[employmentsupportteam@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto: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 family will introduce you to your new neighbours.

## **9 Safety and Stability**

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

Finally, some messages of welcome and reassurance from Aberdeenshire New Scots

*“You will be feeling tired after your journey and you will be worried because you do not understand everything. This is very natural and temporary – you will settle in.” (Wasan, Iraq)*

*“I have learned here the true meaning of trust where both the state and the citizens trust each other – you will be safe here.” (Shirin, Syria)*

*“Welcome to Aberdeenshire. The weather here is very cold, but people's hearts are very warm” (Ali, Afghanistan)*



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