



The
Executive Office
www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk



Welcome

**Guide for Ukrainians
arriving in Northern Ireland**

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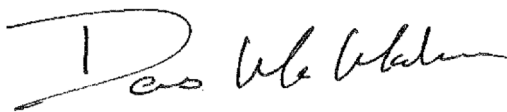
You are very welcome. *Laskavo prosymo.*

Northern Ireland has a history of providing sanctuary to those fleeing persecution and we are thankful that you have arrived safely here with us.

We want to help you transition to life here and this guide aims to provide information on all the various types of support available to you, including housing, employment and access to education. Importantly, it also contains an emergency section and information on keeping safe and where you can get help if you need it.

More detailed advice about specific services in your local area will be made available to you through our Assistance Centres and local partners.

The circumstances that brought you here are among the worst imaginable. Our aim is to do our best for you as you rebuild and recover.



Denis McMahon

Permanent Secretary
The Executive Office

What to expect when you arrive

ARRIVAL

Before travelling to the UK, you and your family member or sponsor should have each other's contact details and we would encourage you to make contact. This will support initial introductions, as you may not know the person that well or at all and understandably there will be some nervousness from both parties. It will also enable you to share information about your travel plans and you should arrange where you will meet your family or sponsor.

There are five main entry points: Belfast International Airport; George Best Airport (Belfast City); City of Derry Airport; Port of Belfast; and Port of Larne. You can also arrive through airports and ports in the Republic of Ireland and travel to Northern Ireland (NI) - to do this you should have your Visa in place to travel into NI.

At each of the entry points there will be designated areas for you to meet your family or sponsor. There will be Welcome Points with useful information for you and a volunteer may be there to provide you with immediate help.

Ideally, your sponsor will meet you when you arrive but if that is not possible, or your sponsor is unexpectedly delayed, the information at the Welcome Point and volunteer staff will be able to assist you in making your onward journey. You can go to the general information point at the port /airport if you need to speak to someone and no-one is present at the Welcome Point. In addition, you can ring the helpline on 0800 232 1271.

If you have a working bank card or cash card, you will be able to use them in the ATMs at your point of entry.

If you are travelling with a pet we recognise that many people fleeing the conflict will not have been able to complete the full health preparations required for their pets, especially in relation to rabies. We have, therefore, put in place a new streamlined process for people bringing their pets from Ukraine. The Animal and Plant Health Agency will provide quick approvals and relevant quarantine arrangements, for which we will cover the costs.

Before arriving you or your carrier should contact the Animal and Plant Health Agency who will confirm their approval and will then organise any necessary stay in quarantine which is required to complete the rabies treatment process.

The maximum stay in quarantine for a pet which has received no rabies treatment is four months. Pets will be considered case by case, and those which have already received some treatment would spend less time in quarantine.

Ukrainians should contact the Animal and Plant Health Agency at pettravel@apha.gov.uk or should call +44 3000 200 301 option 2.

TRANSPORT TO YOUR ACCOMMODATION

You can get free public transport on buses and trains operated by the state-owned company, Translink, to help get you to a safe place. You can get any Translink bus or train service at any time of the day. You cannot get a return journey. The bus or train will have the 'Translink' name and logo on the side.

Free public transport is available from any stop or station in Northern Ireland, including air and sea ports, to any place in Northern Ireland.

If you are coming to Northern Ireland but arriving in the Republic of Ireland first, the offer also includes free travel from Dublin on Translink Ulsterbus services from Bus Áras station or the Enterprise train service from Connelly Station.

To get free public transport from Translink you will need to show:

- your Ukrainian passport or ID issued by the Ukrainian Government; and
- evidence of entry into Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland, such as an airline boarding card, ferry ticket or a booking email from an airline/ferry company, dated within the previous **seven days**.

To help you plan your journey you can use the Translink [journey planner](#).

You can also telephone the Translink Contact Centre for advice on: 028 9066 6630.

ACCOMMODATION

Your sponsor is there to help you settle into life here and the first thing they will do is try to make sure you are comfortable in your accommodation, and you have access to basics such as food, bedding and toiletries.

You will not be asked to pay rent whilst you live with your sponsor, but you may want to agree some house rules that work for both of you.

Your sponsor should ensure that your accommodation is safe and in a suitable condition to accommodate you. Two people should not be in one room unless they are: adult

cohabiting partners; a parent and child; two siblings of the same gender if aged over 10; two siblings regardless of gender if aged under 10. Individuals who didn't previously know each other should not be given the same room.

The accommodation should:

- be kept clean and in a reasonable state;
- have adequate kitchen and bathroom space;
- have access to drinking water;
- have a working smoke detector on each floor of the property and other fire safety precautions suitable for the building e.g. fire doors or escape routes as appropriate;
- have a working carbon monoxide detector in any room containing a solid fuel burning appliance (e.g. a coal fire, wood burning stove);
- have sufficient heating to keep the property at a comfortable temperature;
- have safe gas appliances, fittings and flues and have undertaken a Gas Safety check within the last year (see more information [here](#)) and on:

www.hse.gov.uk/gas/domestic/faqlandlord.htm;
- have safe and working electrics;
- be almost entirely free of damp or mould;
- have doors and windows at entry level that lock properly;
- be easy and safe to move around in, without excessively steep staircases that may cause harm.

Shortly after you arrive at your sponsor's home, you will receive a home visit by Extern or Barnardo's who are carrying out these visits on behalf of government whose job it is to make sure everything is okay. This is nothing to be worried about. We want to make sure you and your sponsor are satisfied that you are in a safe environment and that there are no welfare concerns. You will also continue to receive home visits periodically over the coming months.

We understand that it may be a difficult time for you when you have had to relocate under challenging circumstances. If you need time and space to reflect on your experience of

leaving Ukraine in the first few days whilst you settle in, let your sponsor know that you might need some quiet time to take in what has happened.

Once you feel more settled, you might want to discuss basic house rules with your sponsor such as cooking and cleaning or preferences over issues such as whether smoking in the house is acceptable.

SUPPORT PAYMENT

The Northern Ireland Executive will provide you with a support payment of £200 per person to help you to purchase any necessary essentials. It is anticipated you will receive your payment when you attend your first appointment at the Assistance Centre.

ASSISTANCE CENTRES

It is planned to establish Assistance Centres which will provide you with further support such as help accessing key services; access a health assessment; and obtain help with any queries or concerns you may have.

It is anticipated you will receive your support payment when you attend your first appointment at an Assistance Centre. Interpreters will also be present at Assistance Centres. More information will be provided in due course.

VISAS AND BIOMETRICS

Once you arrive at the UK International Border, you will need to show your permission to travel to the UK letter to the Border Force officers. They will stamp your passport with a six month entry stamp.

If you arrive from the Republic of Ireland with all the correct documentation when you enter Northern Ireland, your Visa is automatically activated on entry and you will not require a UK stamp in your passport. There is no facility within Northern Ireland that you can attend to have your passport stamped.

If you have arrived in Northern Ireland without a Visa you will need to make a Visa application as a matter of priority. In these circumstances you should call the **Law Centre on 028 90 244401** who can provide advice and assist you in accessing the necessary support to make Visa applications or to answer any specific questions regarding Visas.

You will need to provide a photo of your face and your fingerprints, known as biometric information, within six months of arriving in the UK to extend your stay for up to three years and be issued with a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP). You will be contacted with a link to an online form that lets you provide this information.

Once we receive your details, we will tell you how to provide the biometric information. This might be by providing us with a digitised facial image using the www.gov.uk/guidance/using-the-uk-immigration-id-check-app or by visiting one of our application centres in the UK to provide a photograph of your face and your fingerprints. You do not need to do this as soon as you reach Northern Ireland but you do need to make sure that you have provided your biometrics before the six months end.

Once you have provided your information, you will be issued with a Biometric Residence Permit. This permit provides evidence of your right to stay in the UK and enables you to confirm your identity.

Your Biometric Residence Permit will include:

- your name, date and place of birth;
- your fingerprints and a photo of your face (this is your biometric information);
- your immigration status and any conditions of your stay; and
- whether you can access public funds, for example benefits and health services.

Please keep this important document safe as it is evidence of your legal status in the UK and shows how long you may stay in the UK for. If you travel outside of the UK, you should ensure that you carry your Biometric Residence Permit with you.

HELP AVAILABLE

It is important to know that you are not alone and there will be support to answer questions or provide information should you need it.

Information is published on the government website www.nidirect.gov.uk/ukraine and this will be updated as more details become available.

If you need to speak to someone you can contact the Department for Communities, **Make the Call Team** on **0800 232 1271** or makethecall@dfcni.gov.uk

Advisors will do their best to assist you. If they are unable to answer your questions, these will be passed on to others who are providing wraparound support and who will get in contact to assist you.

If you require advice or support on Visa arrangements you can contact **the Law Centre** on **028 90 244401**.

How to access services

This section of the guide provides some basic information about important services you will want to access soon after arriving. These don't all have to be arranged at once.

OPENING A BANK ACCOUNT

There are a range of banks and you can choose one that suits you best. There are also online-only providers which you can use.

To open a bank account you will usually need to show a form of identification such as your passport, Biometric Residence Permit, Driver's Licence or a recognised identity card. You should ask about any charges when you open a bank account. Once you open your account, you will usually be issued with a debit card. Many cards are contactless - some shops will only accept contactless payment – ask your bank about this.

You can also arrange for bills to be paid directly from your account using 'direct debit'.

Further information on how to open a bank account is available at:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/banking/getting-a-bank-account/>

APPLYING FOR BENEFITS

The UK has a welfare system which is designed to help those who face financial hardship, or who have specific needs. Your local Job Centre Plus will be able to help you find out which benefits you may be able to access. This may include:

- **Universal Credit** – a payment for those of working age, to help with your living costs if you're on a low income. You could be working (including self-employed or part time) or be out of work;
- **Pension Credit** - extra money to help with your living costs if you are over the age of 66 and on a low income. Applications for Pensions is online or via telephone;
- **Disability benefits** – extra money to help with additional costs if you have a long term physical or mental health condition or disability;
- **Carer's Allowance** – extra money if you care for someone at least 35 hours a week; and
- **Child Benefit** – extra money to help with the cost of raising a child.

A link to the different types of benefits you could receive can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits>

You can apply for Universal Credit online. You will need to create an account to make a claim. You must complete your claim within 28 days of creating your account or you will have to start again.

To apply online you'll need:

- your bank, building society or credit union account details;
- an email address; and
- access to a telephone.

You will also have to prove your identity. You'll need some identity documents for this, for example your:

- passport; and
- debit or credit card.

There are two ways to get help with your Universal Credit claim. You can either call the **Universal Credit helpline** or use the **Help to Claim service**. Calls to the Universal Credit helpline are free on telephone number: **0800 328 5644**

You can get free support from trained advisers to make a Universal Credit claim. They can help you with things like online applications or preparing for your first jobcentre appointment.

The Help to Claim service is provided by Citizens Advice and is confidential. They will not share your personal information unless you agree. A link to their service can be found here: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/helptoclaim/>

The main method of paying benefits is into a bank account by direct credit transfer (called 'direct payment'). This means the money goes straight into a bank account in your name. If you make a claim, you will be asked for details of the bank account you want to use for your benefit.

You can have your benefit paid into:

- a standard bank or building society account (for example, a current account); or
- a basic bank account (also called an introductory account).

NATIONAL INSURANCE NUMBER

A National Insurance (NI) number is used to make sure your National Insurance contributions and tax are recorded against your name only. This is a code with letters and numbers and never changes.

You can look for and start work without a National Insurance number if you can prove you can work in the UK by showing your Biometric Residence Permit. This will have your Right to Work status printed on the back.

Employers must do Right to Work checks on everyone they hire. Having a National Insurance number is not part of these checks and having a National Insurance number does not prove that someone has a right to work.

If you do not have a National Insurance number you can find information on how to get one at: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number>.

When you make an application you will need to give a copy of your passport and proof that you have the right to work. The employer you want to work for will tell you what documents you need to show.

HEALTH CARE

An 'Access to Health and Social Care' Booklet which includes detailed information on health and social care provision and how to access it is available at the links below:

English version: [Access to Health and Social Care - English](#)

Ukrainian version: [Access to Health and Social Care - Ukrainian](#)

COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

If you have not received your Covid-19 vaccinations or only received in part, you may wish to find out how to get a Covid vaccine here. Details on how to get a Covid vaccine are available at:

[Get a COVID-19 vaccination and booster in Northern Ireland | nidirect](#)

LEARNING ENGLISH (ESOL)

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is a provision for learners whose first language is not English. In Northern Ireland ESOL is delivered through the Department for the Economy's network of six regional Further Education (FE) colleges. FE colleges have worked together to develop ESOL and pre-entry level ESOL courses including standards and curriculum to support learners who have limited or no English Language skills to develop these skills.

Information on English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) can be found at:

[English for speakers of other languages \(ESOL\) | nidirect](#)

[ESOL NI \(esolwebapp.azurewebsites.net\)](#)

GETTING A JOB

You have the right to work as soon as you arrive, having been granted a UK Visa.

- to look for a job, you can use a website called 'NI Jobs -www.nijobs.com, [NIJobs.com | Jobs NI, Jobs in Northern Ireland, Recruitment NI](#) to be connected with thousands of employers
- Careers Service provide careers information, advice and guidance to people living in Northern Ireland. More information is here: [Careers Service | nidirect](#)
- you can visit your local Jobs and Benefits office, details of which can be found at [Jobs and Benefits offices | nidirect](#). Jobs available are also online at <https://www.jobcentreonline.com/JCOLFront/Home.aspx>

Should you require assistance in understanding your employment rights, contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work/rights-at-work>

GETTING YOUR PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION RECOGNISED IN THE UK

If you have a professional qualification, you will need to have this qualification officially recognised if you want to work in a profession that is regulated in the UK. It will need to be recognised by the appropriate regulator for your profession. You will need to do this even if you are doing temporary or one-off work.

The UK Centre for Professional Qualifications (UK CPQ) is a free service that can provide you with information to help get your qualifications recognised in the UK. You can look at the UK CPQ website for more information like whether a profession is regulated and the entry requirements: <https://cpq.ecctis.com/>. Or you can ring their enquiry service on 0871 226 2850.

There are over 200 regulated professions in the UK. A list of the regulated professions and the associated regulators is also on the UK Government website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/professions-regulated-by-law-in-the-uk-and-their-regulators>.

FINDING CHILDCARE

If you get a job you may need to find Childcare. You can access a specified amount of free Childcare depending on your circumstances. For more information, please go to: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/parenting-and-childcare/childcare>

SCHOOL ENROLMENT

Schools should apply their usual admissions procedures, while recognising that refugees like many newcomer pupils will require additional support.

Applications should be made directly to individual schools. An application form (AP1) should be submitted directly to the preferred school(s).

This form is available from the Education Authority (EA) website at:

[Apply for a school place | Education Authority Northern Ireland](#)

To identify local schools, a search engine is available at:

[Search Schools | Education Authority Northern Ireland](#)

Additional advice is available on the EA admissions helpdesk on 028 9598 5595. This is open Monday – Thursday 8.00am – 6.00pm and Friday 8.00am – 5.00pm.

If the school has capacity, it should offer your child a place within 11 working days of receiving the application. Where a school declines admission, an application should be made to an alternative school. However, there may be a right of appeal in respect of any refusal and an Admissions Complaint Form can be submitted to the Department of Education.

More information and the form can be found at:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/revised-procedures-admissions-complaints-de-post-years-1-and-8>

For children coming up to a key transition point (for example due to commence primary education or post-primary education in September 2022), contact should be made in the first instance with the EA admissions helpdesk:

[Admissions Helpdesk | Education Authority Northern Ireland \(eani.org.uk\)](#)

SOURCES OF ADVICE FOR SCHOOLS

The IES webpage outlines what support is available for schools www.eani.org.uk/ies . The Asylum Seeker and Refugee page can be found [here](#).

You can submit a request for help (either learning and curricular-based, or pastoral support) [here](#).

FREE SCHOOL MEALS AND UNIFORMS

Eligibility information for Free School Meals (FSM) and uniform allowance is available on the [EA website](#).

If you do not have the evidence for an application, a paper application should be submitted to the local FSM office under humanitarian grounds. This will provide a 12 week window to allow any evidence to be obtained (e.g. Universal Credit statement) and submitted retrospectively to the FSM office to support the application.

SCHOOL TRANSPORT

The eligibility criteria that will apply to Ukrainian pupils for transport assistance can be found at:

[Eligibility criteria for transport assistance](#)

Applications for transport assistance can be made [online here](#) and here: www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/home-to-school-transport/transport-online-applications. Parents and/or carers should be made aware that it is mainly their responsibility to ensure their children get to school safely.

FURTHER EDUCATION

Further Education (FE) includes any study after secondary education that is not part of higher education (that is, not taken as part of an undergraduate or graduate degree).

Information on Further Education courses and qualifications for 16 to 19 year-olds can be found at: [Further Education | nidirect](#).

APPRENTICESHIPS

An apprenticeship allows you to work and earn money as an employee with a contract of employment and holiday leave while learning and receiving training.

It can take between one and six years to complete an apprenticeship depending on which one you choose, what level it is and your previous experience. It is funded from contributions made by the government and your employer.

Please see apprenticeship options at:

[Apprenticeships | nidirect.](#)

Emergency support and keeping safe

EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION

Occasionally things do go wrong and if they do, it may be something simple that can be resolved with a conversation with your sponsor. We will ensure ongoing support to you. To do this, we are establishing a system of locally based support workers and volunteers who will be able to help and advise you.

If, however, you decide you can no longer live with your sponsor or your sponsor asks you to leave, you should contact the Make the Call Team on **0800 232 1271** and give as much notice as possible.

If there is an immediate need to secure urgent alternative accommodation, you can also call the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (**NIHE**) **emergency number** on **03448 920 900** (during office hours) or **03448 920 908** if after 5.00pm Monday – Friday or at the weekends.

HEALTH EMERGENCIES

If you or a family member has an accident or a sudden serious illness, you should go to your nearest hospital with an Accident and Emergency department which is free for everyone.

If it is an extreme emergency, call **999** and ask for an ambulance to transport you to a hospital. This service is free of charge and should only be used in an emergency. If you are able to, you may also make your own way to the **Accident and Emergency** department.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SLAVERY

A person is trafficked if they are moved from one location to another by others who control, intimidate and coerce them to do work they do not want to do often for little or no money. Trafficking and slavery are serious crimes. If you think you may have been trafficked you should contact:

- The **Police Service of Northern Ireland**: www.psni.police.uk/crime/human-trafficking/
- **Modern Slavery Helpline**: 0800 012 1700

- **Migrant Help:** info@migranthelpuk.org or the 24 hour helpline for victims of trafficking 028 92 448449
- **Women's Aid:** support@belfastwomensaid.org.uk

For further information the Department of Justice's leaflet on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking can be seen here: <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/human-trafficking-leaflet>

Organisation contact numbers and links

MAKE THE CALL

www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/make-call-service

Phone: 0800 232 1271 and

Email: makethecall@dfcni.gov.uk

EMERGENCIES: FIRE, POLICE AND AMBULANCE

Phone: 999

Police – Non Emergency Number

Phone: 0845 600 8000

EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION

Phone: 03448 920 900 (during office hours) or 03448 920 908 if after 5.00pm Monday – Friday or at the weekends.

NI DIRECT

www.nidirect.gov.uk/ukraine

HOMES FOR UKRAINE SCHEME

<https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk/>

LIVING IN NORTHERN IRELAND

[About Northern Ireland | nidirect](#)

UKRAINIAN FAMILY SCHEME

Phone: +44 808 164 8810 (0808 164 8810 from within the UK)

www.gov.uk/guidance/support-for-family-members-of-british-nationals-in-ukraine-and-ukrainian-nationals-in-ukraine-and-the-uk

VISA HELP

UK Visa Helpline: 0808 164 8810

Law Centre: 028 90 244401

BENEFITS

Universal Credit: Phone: 0800 328 5644

<https://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits>

EDUCATION

www.eani.org.uk/school-management/intercultural-education-service-ies/asylum-seeker-and-refugee-asr-support-team

EMPLOYMENT

Job Centre

Phone: 028 9090 9327

www.jobcentreonline.com/JCOLFront/Home.aspx

UKRAINIAN NORTHERN IRELAND GROUP

Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/ukrainiansinni/

MODERN SLAVERY HELPLINE

Phone: 0800 0121 700

www.northernireland.gov.uk/news/be-alert-modern-day-slavery

MIGRANT HELP

Phone: 028 9244 8449

Email: info@migranthelpuk.org

RED CROSS

Phone: 028 9073 5350

www.redcross.org.uk