

# A host's guide to navigating the Ukraine Refugee Schemes in Richmond-upon-Thames

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## 1. Finding a guest from Ukraine to host

Richmond Council recommends registering with ResetUK, which is in the best position as a government-funded charity to match hosts and guests safely: <https://resetuk.org>

Hosts report having also found guests through word of mouth (relatives and friends of people who have already arrived in Richmond), and unofficial matching sites such as <https://www.opora.uk>, <https://icanhelp.host> or Facebook group UK Accommodation for Ukrainian Refugees. Note that such sites and groups are unregulated so cannot be officially endorsed. If you use unregulated sites or FB groups proceed with care, make sure you meet the other party on Facetime/Zoom, be alert to anything that seems irregular or makes you feel uncomfortable, and ensure that all DBS and accommodation checks are completed by the Council.

### Making sure you are a good match

In discussions with 30+ hosts on their experiences, all agreed that it is *essential* to find out as much as possible about each other before you commit. It's a good idea to video call your prospective guest a few times, and to check out in advance anything important to you personally, such as whether they are smokers, whether they speak English, how independent they wish to be, whether they have medical or mobility issues, whether they are covid vaccinated, childrens' routines/bedtimes, allergies if host has pets etc. Ukrainian driving licences, vaccination history etc are held on a government app, and you could ask to see this if you want confirmation of status. Most guests will be female or minors, as men 18-60 years are only allowed to leave Ukraine if they have 3+ children

or have a medical exemption. If anything seems irregular, probe to ensure they are genuine refugees, and not eg. dual-passport holders seeking to come to the UK.

The objective should be to check for compatibility in advance, to minimise the chance of the relationship breaking down once your guest has arrived. If for any reason tensions do arise, **Richmond Mid Mediation** offers free counselling and mediation services to households hosting Ukrainians: contact 020 8891 6860 or email [admin@midmediation.org.uk](mailto:admin@midmediation.org.uk). Refugees Welcome in Richmond can also put you in touch with an experienced relationship counsellor if tensions arise or if unresolved prior issues surface for guests once here.

Under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, hosts receive goodwill payments of £350 per month for the first twelve months, and are asked to accommodate guests for a minimum of six months but ideally up to three years if it remains dangerous for them to return to Ukraine. While it is reasonable to expect guests to be considerate and to clear up after themselves during their stay, they should not be required to act as cleaners, childminders, dogwalkers, babysitters or undertake any other form of unpaid work within your household.

(There is no government funding for the parallel Ukraine Family Visa scheme, so participants in that scheme are not eligible for the £350 payments or the £200 welcome payment, and significantly there is no mechanism for notifying the Council that people have arrived under this scheme. It is therefore important that those arriving under the Family Visa Scheme should let the Council know they are here; they can then access the same welcome visit and other provision as those accommodated by hosts who are not family members.)

## 2. Applying for a visa

Once matched, you can apply for a visa online:

<https://apply.visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/has-international-ukrainian-passport>.

If guests don't speak fluent English and have access to a printer/scanner, it will be easier to fill in the form together with you completing the form on their behalf (the form does cater for this) and the guest supplying answers about occupation, criminal record etc. It will also be easier to give the host's email address / phone number and forward notifications in Ukrainian (cutting and pasting into Google Translate). A separate form is required for each individual including children; there is a box to tick if only one parent's details are available. The form has the option to save each page and resume later. At the end you need to upload the following documents (which must be printed out and scanned as pdfs):

- Evidence that applicant was living in Ukraine on or before 31 December 2021 (eg covid vaccination record, bank statements, utility bills with home address)

- Passport for each applicant and sponsor, plus extension stamp if expired
- Birth certificate for children under 18
- Sponsor's passport

The result is a letter giving permission to travel to the UK. On entry it is essential that they get their passport stamped with the stamp that allows them to live and work in the UK for six months. Within six months of arrival they must go to a UK Visa and Citizenship Application Services Centre to convert this to a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) giving leave to remain in the UK for three years from arrival.

### **3. Travelling to host on arrival**

Within the first 48 hours of arrival guests are eligible for a free single onward journey via National rail, bus, or coach to their host's accommodation in England, Scotland, N Ireland and Wales — they just need to show their passport and boarding pass/ticket to confirm their time on arrival in the UK.

There should be a Ukrainian help desk at airports and major railway hubs. (At Luton, parking is free if you use car parks 1 and 2: press the help button at the exit barrier and say you have picked up a Ukrainian guest, quoting manager 'James' if necessary.)

### **4. Things to organise**

#### **a. Disclosure and barring service (DBS) check (Homes for Ukraine Scheme only)**

The visa application triggers the Council to send a link so that all adults over 16 in the host household can apply online for a DBS check. It is free if you apply through this link. The certificates will come back between two and ten days later, and must be taken in person to the Civic Centre in Twickenham for verification. DBS checks can be completed once guests are here, but ideally should be completed before guests arrive to reassure them that they are coming to a safe environment.

#### **b. Council Home Inspection (Homes for Ukraine Scheme only)**

The visa application also triggers the Council to email to arrange a home inspection, ideally before but if necessary after the guests arrive. This usually takes about 15 minutes. They check the room is suitable and large enough, and that the gas boiler has been serviced. If smoke alarms are needed your local fire service may fit them for free.

#### **c. Council Welcome Visit (Both Ukraine schemes)**

For guests on the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, the Council knows when they are arriving and where they are living through the notification of government funding for them. The

Council will therefore arrange a home visit to assess their needs and advise them what they are entitled to, which is basically the same benefits and support as for any UK resident. If there are children, the welcome visit is conducted by Achieving for Children, otherwise by the Adult Social Care Team.

As no government funding is available for the Ukraine Family Visa Scheme, the Council has no way of knowing that guests have arrived under this scheme, and participants will not be eligible for the initial £200 or monthly £350 payments. Nevertheless, it is important that hosts notify the Council of their guests' arrival, so that they can access the same welcome visit and other provision as anyone arriving through the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

#### **d. Claim £200 Welcome Payment**

Richmond Council provides £200 in Post Office vouchers to meet immediate needs until Universal Credit payments come through, which can take several weeks (This payment is not available for those hosted by relatives under the Family Visa scheme). Each claimant, including children, needs to go in person to the Civic Centre reception (44 York Street, Twickenham, TW1 3BZ) between 10am and 4pm Monday to Friday, with passport and permission to travel letter as proof of ID. No appointment is necessary, though it may speed things up. Any issues, ask for Graham.

#### **e. Apply for Benefits (a priority, as payments are not backdated)**

##### Universal Credit (for adults 18-65 yrs):

Submit application online <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>, with a follow-up appointment at the Job Centre. Alternatively, the Job Centre can help guests apply online. Certified copies of all documents can be done at the Job Centre. Apply as soon as possible as UC is not necessarily backdated. Guests will need an email address, access to a phone, and a bank account for the UC to be paid into. You can supply your bank details if guests do not yet have a bank account. The £200 welcome payment is intended to tide them over until UC payments come through, as this can take a few weeks.

##### Pension Credit (for adults 66 yrs+):

Email or phone the Department of Work and Pensions (0800991234 – can select English or another language). If you call on their behalf your guest needs to give consent. Ask for their NI (National Insurance) number to be set up at the same time.

##### Child Benefit (claimed by main carer for children up to 16 yrs or 20 yrs if in approved education):

You will need a birth certificate. Guests are likely to have a government app on which documents such as birth certificates might be loaded. If the birth certificate is not available, ask the Job Centre for a note confirming that the family are refugees. You can register for child benefit online: [www.gov.uk/child-benefit](http://www.gov.uk/child-benefit). Answer yes to question 18 (subject to immigration control in last 6 mths).

## **f. Register with GP/Medical services**

In person or online:

<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/gps/how-to-register-with-a-gp-surgery/>

An urgent appointment, eg for a diabetes prescription, will be triggered if you specify it is for 'Immediate Necessary Treatment'. No NHS number is necessary, including for dental or optician appointments.

For NHS dentists: <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist>.

For opticians: <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-an-optician>

If your guest needs a lot of prescription medication it can be cheaper to buy a PCC (Pre-Payment certificate) which enables you to get all the prescriptions you need for a set price: £30.25 for 3 months, or £108 for 12 months (can be paid in 10 instalments). This may be more cost-effective than paying the normal charge of £9.35 per item..

## **g. Arrange Covid vaccination**

Most guests will not have been vaccinated. NHS advisors and interpreters are available at NHS vaccination centres to speak to guests with concerns about vaccination. Take guests to Queen Mary's Roehampton or any other walk-in NHS clinic – no need to be registered with a GP:

<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-walk-in-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-site>

## **h. Open a bank account**

Most online banks (e.g. Monzo, Sterling) and high street banks (e.g. NatWest, Santander, HSBC, Halifax) are offering accounts for Ukrainians without requiring an NI number. Ask for a 'basic bank account', as this will be the easiest and quickest to set up. Print off their form, help your guest fill it in, and take into a branch together with their passport/letter of invitation. Some banks also ask for proof of address (bank statement, utility bill in the host's name) and a letter from the host confirming they are residing with you.

## **i. Apply for free SIM card**

Vodafone offers Ukrainians arriving on either scheme SIM cards pre-loaded with 20GB data per month plus unlimited calls and texts for six months. Hosts can apply on behalf of guests: <https://www.refugease.org/vodafone-sim>.

They can take 30 days to arrive, so as a stop-gap buy a 30-day giffgaff SIM card from a newsagent or post office (or online for delivery in 1 to 2 days) which costs £10 for 15GB with no contract or commitment: <https://www.giffgaff.com/sim-only-deals>

## **j. Facilitate travel**

Oyster cards can be bought for £5 for contactless travel prior to having a bank card, or any cashpoint card can be used. Children under 5 travel free, and children 5-18 yrs, Students 18+ and adults 60+ can apply online for a photocard for free or discounted travel on all transport services in London:

<https://tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel>

When applying online skip verification, as you won't have a 10 digit number to verify the passport, and it will generate a QR code which you need to take to a post office with their passport.

Adults seeking work may be entitled to the Jobcentre Plus Travel Discount which gives 50% off pay-as-you-go adult fares on bus, tube, tram, DLR, London Overground, TfL Rail (excluding between West Drayton and Reading) and most National Rail services in London. For more information see link:

<https://tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel/jobcentre-plus-travel-discount?intcmp=54730#on-this-page-1>

Apply for a free bicycle at: <https://thebikeproject.co.uk/>

Drivers can use their Ukrainian driving licence for the first 12 months after arriving, but will then need to exchange it for a British licence:

<https://www.gov.uk/exchange-foreign-driving-licence>

#### **k. Apply for Biometric resident permit**

Apply within six months of arrival as their visa stamp is only valid for six months from date of entry. The BRP will extend this to three years from date of entry, making it easier for guests to leave and re-enter the UK, which may otherwise be less straightforward at border control.

Guests need to go in person to a UK Visa and Citizenship Application Services (UKVCAS) Centre. The two nearest are in Croydon (CR9 2EF) and near Fenchurch Street (EC3R 7AF). You have to make an appointment online:

<https://apply.visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/ukraine-scheme-brp>

If you can't find an appointment keep scrolling down until you find more slots. Your guests must take their appointment confirmation with QR code together with their passports (or other ID) to the appointment. The card should arrive by post in ten working days.

The BRP card will show name, date and place of birth, fingerprints and a photo of face, immigration status / conditions of stay, whether entitled to public funds ie benefits and health services, and in some cases the National Insurance number (depending on visa status and date issued).

#### **l. Find work**

The Job Centre will provide support with finding work in the UK at the Universal Credit appointment, as you cannot claim UC unless you are looking for work. Other sources of help include: <https://www.uatalents.com>

<https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/get-support/services/register-with-us-to-get-help-finding-work/>

Guests can start work without a National Insurance number if they can show they have the right to work right to work in the UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/prove-right-to-work>

### **m. Apply for school / nursery places.**

You can apply before guests arrive. Some schools are paying for uniform, shoes, gym clothes and school meals- keep receipts to claim back.

### **o. Sign up for English lessons**

Richmond and Hillcroft Adult community College (Parkshot) has added free English courses for Ukrainians over the summer. New courses (for all nationalities) will now start in September at all levels. To enrol, guests need to first sign up for an assessment to determine level:: <https://www.rhacc.ac.uk/course/ukranian-esol-enrolment-day>

Barnes Community Association English School is also running free classes — call 020 8878 7229

The Ukrainian Institute offers free English classes for displaced Ukrainians in person in Paddington or online (though fully booked at time of writing):

<https://refugee-support.ukrainianinstitute.org.uk/english-school>

Plus an enrolment form in Ukrainian:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfN4E0NUR9og7B0sYEuYXiDekjg7Uf46MPul8qTD97dcZEcVw/viewform>

## **5. Local refugee support groups**

### **WhatsApp groups:**

- **Ukraine befrienders** run by Refugees Welcome in Richmond. Contact Hirsch Cashdan 07710981243 to be added to the Hosts' group in English, and for your guests to be added to the Guests' group in Ukrainian.
- **Twickenham** Katie Mullen 07868 756707  
<https://chat.whatsapp.com/Hg5qb0gzfS8A96EUBf9zT>
- **Teddington** Contact Celia Marsh 07305905170

- **Kew** Contact Sally Durant <https://chat.whatsapp.com/Hg5qb0gzfS8A96EUBfF9zT>
- **Ham** Contact Sarah Tippett 07956 692473

#### Facebook groups:

- **RWinR:** <https://www.facebook.com/refugeeswelcomeinrichmond/>
- **Ukrainians in Richmond:** <https://www.facebook.com/richmondukrainians/>

#### Social Hubs:

- **The Vineyard / Refugees Welcome in Richmond**  
Weekly social hub for hosts and guests every Friday 2-4 pm, with free tea, coffee, cakes. The Vineyard also offers crisis support sessions Mon-Friday, 9-11 am.  
2a The Vineyard, Richmond TW10 6AQ.  
<https://www.vineyardcommunity.org/get-help/crisis-support/>
- **Prosperity Ukrainian Café and Restaurant**  
1-3pm Sundays, social hub, childrens' language classes.  
Twickenham 59 York St, Twickenham TW1 3LP. Telephone: 020 3302 5495  
<https://www.londondonationsforukraine.org/>
- **ETNA community centre**  
Fortnightly on Fridays 4-6pm.  
13 Rossllyn Rd East Twickenham TW1 2AR.  
<https://etnacentre.org/friends-of-ukraine/>

## 6. Preparing your home

- **Insurance:**  
The Association of British Insurers has announced that hosts need not notify their contents insurer unless guests stay beyond 12 months. If guests are lodged in an annexe or second home, policyholders should notify their insurer, as this could constitute a legal tenancy. More details:  
<https://www.abi.org.uk/products-and-issues/topics-and-issues/ukraine-crisis/>
- **Shops selling Ukrainian food products:**  
East Sheen: Polish shop on Upper Richmond Road.  
Kew/North Sheen: Polish section at Sainsbury's, A316 roundabout Apex Corner.  
Twickenham: Hungarian store 'Paprika', Polish section at large Tesco.  
Ealing: Hungarian store next to number 65 bus stop, Polish bakery nearby.
- **Creating welcoming space for guests:**  
Make space in fridge / freezer.



Show where they can wash and dry their laundry.

Maybe provide some toiletries / toys to make them feel at home.

If you know when their birthday is, perhaps arrange a little birthday surprise.

### **Make a list of house rules**

Far easier to set these out at the start, than try and address issues later on when you might feel awkward about appearing critical. Set out expectations clearly even if they seem obvious, eg. putting away washed pots from the draining board, setting out to what extent you eat together, to what extent children can access your space, what/where is 'your space' etc. Do not underestimate how important this is for happy coexistence.

NB guests should not be required to do housework, childcare, babysitting, dog walking or any other form of unpaid work for the host household. They are displaced refugees not au-pairs. If you wish to enter into a paid arrangement for such services then this should be set out and agreed in advance, before both parties commit to the relationship.

## **7. Free advice for Ukrainian refugees**


- **Sterling Law firm**  
Contact [contact@sterling-law.co.uk](mailto:contact@sterling-law.co.uk) or via their [Facebook page](#).
- **Nataliya Burns** of Montecristo LLP is an Immigration Legal Executive.  
Contact 020 7164 6234 or 07815 068665, [nburns@montecristollp.com](mailto:nburns@montecristollp.com).
- **Ukraine Advice Project UK** provide free legal advice on UK immigration, visas and asylum. Contact [ukraine@freemovement.org.uk](mailto:ukraine@freemovement.org.uk).
- **Citizens Advice Richmond** has a dedicated Ukraine resource to provide information and advice on benefits, work, debt, housing, health and consumer issues. Contact 0736 182 7355, [citizensadvice-richmond.org](http://citizensadvice-richmond.org)
- **Citizens Advice Hampton Hill** has a dedicated Ukrainian resource, 94-102 High Street, Hampton Hill, TW12 1NY, Phone: 0300 330 2114

## **8. Information sources**

- <https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk>
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-scheme-frequently-asked-questions>
- [www.gov.uk/government/publications/welcome-a-guide-for-ukrainians-arriving-in-the-uk](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/welcome-a-guide-for-ukrainians-arriving-in-the-uk)
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/support-for-family-members-of-british-nationals-in-ukraine-and-ukrainian-nationals-in-ukraine-and-the-uk>

- <https://www.redcross.org.uk/-/media/documents/get-help-as-a-refugee/ukraine/information-leaflet-for-ukrainians-arriving-in-the-uk.pdf> (downloads file)
- The Financial Times Q&As: <https://www.ft.com/content/732a2cb2-3160-4f4a-b736-dc282ccbdd83>
- The Ukrainian Institute website has a wealth of information from setting up bank accounts, getting psychological help, claiming financial help, healthcare and childcare, to driving and insurance, with links to various other sites in both English and Ukrainian: <https://refugee-support.ukrainianinstitute.org.uk/settling-into-the-uk>
- Ukrainian Citizen crisis: Free hosts workshops aiming to increase awareness of trauma, mental health, recovery and resilience building and the role hosts will inevitably play <https://normalmagic.co.uk/booking-professionals/>
- <https://www.hhri.org/organisation/war-trauma-foundation/>
- Mental health - <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/get-sup>
- <https://www.hhri.org/are-you-a-survivor/rehabilitation-healing/>
- <https://www.connectedkingston.uk/>
- Kingston voluntary and community organisations directory <https://www.vconnectsystem.org.uk/kingstononlinedirectory/>
- London plus working list of organisations supporting Ukrainians <https://londonplus.org/>
- <https://www.psychologytools.com/articles/free-ukrainian-translations-of-trauma-and-ptsd-psychoeducational-resources/>
- [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1064315/Ukraine\\_Welcome\\_Guidance.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1LpFFyKNATtBiGqdeEua3g-bQhrJ9zCFxC1ajWUnvxE1jQnU1SURoY2Wk](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1064315/Ukraine_Welcome_Guidance.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1LpFFyKNATtBiGqdeEua3g-bQhrJ9zCFxC1ajWUnvxE1jQnU1SURoY2Wk)
- <https://advice-ukraine.co.uk/>
- Church attended by many Ukrainians (Reverend is Ukrainian) <http://www.allsaintshanworth.com/>
- <https://british-ukrainianaid.org>
- Romanian and Eastern European Hub - <https://ro-eehub.org.uk/>
- British Culture - <http://projectbritain.com/>
- <https://multiculturalrichmond.org.uk/>
- How to travel London - <https://www.visitlondon.com/>
- Support for bereavement: <https://space2grieve.org.uk>
- <https://www.hamptonhillurc.org.uk/bereavement-café/>
- <https://www.cruse.org.uk/>

## 9. Insights from Poland on hosting Ukrainian refugees

By Agata Lesniewska & Richard Blood 

Dear British friends! 🇬🇧

It's incredible to see such a huge response to this unprecedented humanitarian crisis. In the month following the outbreak of the war on 24th February, more than 3.7 million Ukrainians were forced to flee their country, of which 2 million found shelter in Poland. In four short weeks, Polish people had to quickly establish a nationwide refugee support network, learning mostly by trial and error. We would like to share their experiences to help the British public prepare to welcome Ukrainian guests into their homes.

Please remember that people you are inviting into your home likely have been through a lot. They may be traumatised by their ordeal and may still have family members trapped in Ukraine, fighting in the Ukrainian forces, or even already killed. They are in a strange country and will feel uncomfortable because they are imposing themselves on you. Your tact, patience, and empathy will be vital, and it will be the little things that matter most.

- 1) 🏠 Most Ukrainians will have come from warm homes with many of the same comforts we are used to, so please ensure the accommodation you are offering is warm, with natural light, sufficient space, child proof (where they have small children), and allows them privacy. If your guest is elderly, with mobility issues, then they may prefer to be on the ground floor, providing they can easily get to a toilet and washroom.
- 2) 📝 Write down all essential information that your guests might need – your name and phone number, full address of the accommodation, WiFi password, door code, contact numbers to local organisations that are helping Ukrainian refugees etc., and leave it in a clearly visible place in the room.
- 3) 🛏 Prepare fresh bed linen and towels, preferably washed in a hypoallergenic detergent – especially if you're hosting families with young children. Some people from Eastern Europe can experience a mild skin reaction to British tap water immediately after arrival, so bottles of mineral water may well be really appreciated.
- 4) 🧴 Other useful items to leave in their room are personal care items, such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner, comb/hairbrush, hypoallergenic body wash, face moisturiser, and hand cream. Depending on who you are welcoming into your home, other items could be nappies, sanitary towels, nursing pads, hair ties, baby care products, shaving items, a sewing kit and basic medicines like painkillers and anti-diarrhoea tablets. Many of these items are deeply personal, and your guests may be too embarrassed to ask for them.
- 5) 👕 Once your guests have arrived, then you can think about more particular items such as underwear, a few changes of clothing - you can ask at any local donation

collection point if you cannot provide these yourself. Other homely and welcoming touches could include slippers for your guests by the front door.

6) 🍞 Ukrainian cuisine differs from British cooking, and some foods (for example toasted bread) might even be found unpalatable. Most guests will be happy to eat what you do, but if you sense that your guest is longing for familiar food, your closest Eastern European or Polish grocery store will have the essentials and you could offer Ukrainian fare such as sourdough bread, cold meats, sour cream, Polish-style sausages, honey, curd cheese, eggs and soups (stews with lumps rather than creamed soups). Some large supermarkets also stock Eastern European products grouped together in separate sections.

7) 🚪 Don't forget to remove everything you'll need to use from the room where your guests will be staying. It's very important to give them privacy and a space just for themselves.

8) 😟 Keep in mind your guests may be feeling stressed and anxious about being in a strange home in a strange country, while also deeply worried about other family members and friends who either haven't been able to leave Ukraine, or are refugees elsewhere. As a result they may act in strange ways, or even swing between different moods, being withdrawn or overly chatty, shy and scared or nervous and emotional, grateful for every small gesture of kindness, or acting as if they are at a hotel on a business trip. Give your guests space, and let them come to terms with their new circumstances in their own time. Offer help, but don't push, and they will start opening up when they're ready. If you're hosting a family with small children, maybe offer to babysit so the mother can have a moment to rest, collect her thoughts or even cry in private.

9) 📖 If you want to read up on some Ukrainian history and traditions, there are excellent books by a Kyiv-based publishing house available to download for free: <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=5390482984317856&set=gm.692272092209556> (but you can donate to help their business). Talk to other household members and share your knowledge with each other, and let your neighbours know you will be hosting people from Ukraine. British and Ukrainian cultures do differ, so if you've never met anyone from Eastern Europe you may be in for a surprise. Ukrainians are a proud, passionate and resilient people who value family ties above all else and don't beat around the bush; their directness can sometimes be interpreted as rudeness by the more reserved Brits. But kindness and concern are a universal language, alongside patience and space.

10) 🗣️ A good tip is to install a voice translator app, Ukrainian language pack and keyboard on your phone. It's likely that most Ukrainians coming to the UK will speak English to at least some degree, but their older family members might only speak

Ukrainian and Russian. Some might not know how to use a smartphone either. Knowledge of Cyrillic would of course make communication so much easier (but please don't think you have to be fluent or even hold a conversation. A couple of greetings, please, thank you, and welcome in Ukrainian will speak volumes. If you're feeling motivated, you can start learning Ukrainian from scratch e.g. on Duolingo (all the ad revenue from people learning Ukrainian on the app will be donated to Ukraine relief).

**11)** 🙄 It is important to acknowledge that your guests are choosing to come and live with you, so do let them ask any questions they may have before they decide to accept your offer. Exchange as much useful information as possible before extending your offer, and don't be discouraged if they keep asking for more details, photos or even personal references. They aren't being choosy, just ensuring they are emotionally safe and can relax after the trauma of losing everything and fleeing to a strange country.

**12)** 🧑 Hosting refugees is hard work, and a sacrifice – not unlike becoming a foster parent. It will require time, patience, compassion, organisation, determination, creativity, your own initiative and, inevitably, money. These people will be relying on you to make them feel safe and cared for. You are also indirectly inviting the war into your own private space - so expect for it to be a transformative experience that leaves a huge emotional mark. But your help and patience will be invaluable, and you may well make new amazing friends who want to show you equal kindness once they are over the worst of their experiences.



Thank you so much for helping Ukrainian people in their hour of need. 💙💛