

Benefits and entitlements if you're sponsoring a person/s under the Homes for Ukraine scheme

Introduction

The Royal Borough of Greenwich is committed to providing all the help it can for people fleeing Ukraine. This factsheet aims to support borough residents who are sponsoring people from Ukraine under the government's Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme - Homes for Ukraine (gov.uk/register-interest-homes-ukraine). The scheme has been running since March 2022 so you may be hosting someone for the first time who is already settled in the UK, or the council may have 'rematched' you with a person/s who have left their previous host perhaps because the initial sponsorship period came to an end.

Whatever the circumstances, this factsheet will help you work out how your benefits and entitlements could be affected by taking someone into your home under the scheme, tackle your most pressing questions and provide general reassurance.

The government has said that sponsors who are hosting refugees will not be better or worse off in terms of their benefit entitlements.

We have also listed some key sources of support in the borough for you and the person/family you are sponsoring. Please note that this factsheet is only for residents who are sponsoring people from Ukraine under the Homes for Ukraine scheme. There is separate benefit factsheet for guests which is available here royalgreenwich.gov.uk/financial-support-explained.

Your questions answered...

How will the 'thank-you' payments affect my benefits?

You will receive a tax-free monthly 'thank you' payment from the government of £350 per month if your guest is in their first 12 months in the UK. The payment will increase to £500 per month once your guest/s have been in the UK for over 12 months, even if you have not hosted before. They are paid in arrears and will not affect any benefits and entitlements you are receiving.

You will need to notify the relevant benefit office/s about your change in circumstances, but the payment will be ignored when calculating Housing Benefit, Universal Credit, Pension Credit, Income Support, income-related Employment and Support Allowance and income-based Jobseeker's Allowance and will not reduce the amount you receive.

Note that thank-you payments are only payable if you are hosting a guest with the agreement of the council. They can continue for up to 2 years if you continue hosting for a longer period.

I receive a single person council tax discount because I live alone - will I now lose it?

No – your 25% single person council tax discount should continue uninterrupted if you accommodate a Ukrainian refugee. Other council tax discounts are also unaffected.

I receive reduced housing costs because I had extra rooms in my home – will I qualify for extra help if I accommodate a Ukrainian refugee?

No – this is because the person/family you are supporting won't be treated as normally living with you. The number of bedrooms considered for you, under the size criteria that's used to calculate your entitlement to Housing Benefit and Universal Credit housing costs, will not change.

I'm on disability benefits and receive a severe disability premium in my means-tested benefits because I live alone – will I still qualify if I take in a refugee?

If you receive a severe disability premium in your benefits (Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related ESA, Pension Credit or Housing Benefit), you will not lose your entitlement if you take in a refugee under the scheme as they would be considered as living with you temporarily.

Can I charge rent?

No – you should not charge rent as the sponsorship scheme assumes that the accommodation will be provided rent free. However, you may wish to ask for a reasonable contribution towards food and utilities if you are struggling with the cost of living.

Can the person I'm sponsoring work and claim benefits?

Yes – people arriving under the scheme can live and work in the UK for up to three years and can claim the full range of health benefits, social security benefits and employment support. Please see our Benefit support and entitlements for Ukrainian nationals arriving in the UK factsheet (royalgreenwich.gov.uk/financial-support-explained) for more information.

Where to get extra help/support if you need it

Financial support in an emergency or crisis

The Council's Emergency Support Scheme is a discretionary Greenwich council scheme to assist residents in crisis. Support includes Emergency Support Payments for residents who don't have enough resources to meet essential short-term needs in an emergency or crisis. You don't have to be receiving benefits to qualify. There are also Community Support awards for residents on low-income benefits who need help with one-off items.

Apply online via the Royal Greenwich website (royalgreenwich.gov.uk/ess). Please call **020 8921 2078** (available Monday to Thursday 10am to 5pm; Friday 10am to 4.30pm) if you need help with the online form. If your emergency support payment application is successful, you will be issued with a cash payment which you can redeem at the Post Office.

Greenwich Supports

Check out the Council's Greenwich Supports webpages for information about sources of financial, practical and health and wellbeing support available across the borough (royalgreenwich.gov.uk/greenwich-supports). If you are in crisis and need support, please call Live Well Greenwich on 0800 470 4831.

Live Well Greenwich

Live Well Greenwich supports residents to live healthier, happier lives for longer. It works together with local services, and communities to promote good physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Live Well Greenwich can provide signposting and support to get help with things like eating well, becoming more active, stopping smoking, drinking less, money/debt/benefits advice, employment and training, support with housing needs, NHS health checks and support managing your long-term health condition.

Call the Live Well Greenwich Line on **0800 470 4831** (available Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 7.30pm, Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm, Saturday 9am to 12 noon). to access this support or visit the website for further information: livewellgreenwich.org.uk

The British Red Cross

The British Red Cross supports people from Ukraine who are in the UK. The information on their website will help you and your family to find out about services and support that might be available. For any more information about British Red Cross, or for emotional support please call the free British Red Cross support line on **0808 196 3651** (open between 10am - 5pm Monday to Friday, 10am to 8pm Wednesday). Interpreters are available.

www.redcross.org.uk/get-help/get-help-as-a-refugee/help-for-refugees-from-ukraine#Ukrainian

If you need benefits advice or information?

For benefits advice and/or to check if you're missing out on any entitlements, contact the Welfare Rights Service Public Advice Line on **020 8921 6375** or textphone **18001 020 8921 6375** (available Mon, Wed, Thurs: 10am –1pm). If you need help with claims (including managing your Universal Credit claim), ring: Universal Support **Team 020 8921 3333** (available Mon to Fri, 10am-4pm) or email universal-support@royalgreenwich.gov.uk.

You can also contact both teams via the Royal Greenwich website using an online contact form royalgreenwich.gov.uk/xfp/form/530

Drop-in face-to-face advice is available at outreach locations around the borough (excluding public holidays) – find out more here royalgreenwich.gov.uk/advicehubs

Further benefits information is available on the Royal Greenwich website here royalgreenwich.gov.uk/benefits-advice or use our online benefit calculator to work out which benefits you may be able to claim (found here royalgreenwich.gov.uk/benefit-calculator).

GOV.UK

GOV.UK is the UK government's website and is the best place to find information about government services. Visit the website:

- for more information about the Homes for Ukraine scheme including your rights and responsibilities as a sponsor: gov.uk/government/collections/homes-for-ukraine-sponsor-guides
- to view Homes for Ukraine guidance for guests: gov.uk/government/collections/homes-for-ukraine-guidance-for-guests
- for translated information: Homes for Ukraine guidance for guests is available in a limited range of languages (see above and click the language link at the top right of the page).

Useful Links

Universal Credit Help to claim

0800 144 8 444

Free phone service delivered by Citizens Advice: Advisers are available 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday. Ask for a translator if you need to get advice in a different language.

UK Visa and Immigration Ukraine Helpline

0808164 8810 or +44 (0)175 390 7510 if you cannot contact UK 0808 numbers.

Local Jobcentres

Woolwich Jobcentre

Nelson House, 50 Wellington Street,
Woolwich,
London SE18 6PY

0800 169 0190

Opening hours: Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm

Bexleyheath Jobcentre

Westminster House, 186-194 Broadway,
Bexleyheath,
Kent DA6 7BB

0800 169 0190

Opening hours: same as Woolwich office



Citizens Advice Greenwich

Independent organisation providing free, confidential advice and information on a range of issues including debt, benefits, housing, consumer, employment, family, benefits. Freephone **080 8278 7695** (Mon to Tues 10am-1pm; Wed to Thurs 2-4.30pm; Fri 10-12) greenwichcab.org.uk

Royal Greenwich Services

Emergency Support Scheme (ESS)

020 8921 2078 (available Mon to Thurs 10am-5pm, Fri 10am-4.30pm)

emergency-support@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

royalgreenwich.gov.uk/ess

For emergency support payment or community support awards. Apply online

Adult Social Care

You may be able to access a range of services and support, from short-term help and rehabilitation, to ongoing support and risk prevention.

020 8921 2304 (available Mon to Thurs, 9am-5pm, Fri 9am-4pm)

aops.contact.officers@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

royalgreenwich.gov.uk/adult-social-care-team

If the person you're sponsoring needs immigration advice

Visit GOV.UK website for details of how to find an immigration adviser: gov.uk/find-an-immigration-adviser