

# Employing Ukrainian Refugees

## The Complete Guide

**Support and guidance on bringing  
displaced Ukrainians into the  
UK workforce**



# 1

## Routes to the UK

## In response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, many UK businesses have stepped up to help.

Marks & Spencer, Lush, and PwC, just to name a few, are offering jobs to Ukrainian refugees. If you're in a position where you would like to provide work, but aren't sure where to start, we've got you covered.

In this first part of the series, we'll be exploring the different processes and schemes to get a Ukrainian national into work. This includes the criteria for employment and the checks you should conduct to ensure your business meets current employment law.

If you need immediate advice on employing a Ukrainian national, you can speak to an employment law expert today on **0800 015 4939**.

### The situation so far...

Since the crisis began the government has introduced several schemes to help refugees settle and find work in the UK. Mostly, these schemes revolve around the individual being sponsored by someone. This may be where some confusion occurs, as there are already existing rules around sponsorship and immigration. However, you don't have to sponsor in the usual way. You can 'sponsor' Ukrainians by complying with the necessary requirements. The main aspect of this is providing accommodation for at least 6 months.

We'll explain how this works in greater detail as we explore each of the schemes providing a route to the UK for Ukrainian nationals.



## Ukraine Family Scheme

British citizens are able to sponsor Ukrainian nationals who are immediate or extended family members.

**Individuals settled in the UK may also sponsor family members, so long as they meet the criteria. For a settled individual to sponsor a family member, they must:**

- Have indefinite leave to remain; or
- Have settled status\*; or
- Have proof of permanent residence; or
- Have refugee status or humanitarian protection in the UK.

\*European individuals can sponsor with pre-settled status.

The individual they sponsor must have been a resident in Ukraine prior to 1st January 2022.

### How does it work?

The application process is different depending on whether it comes from inside or outside of the UK.

Let's start with outside.

If the refugee has a valid Ukrainian passport, and has been accepted through the family scheme, they'll receive a letter confirming they have permission to travel to the UK without a UK visa. On arrival they'll be issued with a six-month entry stamp. This is evidence of their right to work, study, and claim benefits in the UK.

Within six months of arrival, the individual needs to submit their biometric information to extend their stay up to three years. If they choose to do this, they'll receive a biometric residence permit (BRP). If you employ the individual, you should conduct a [right to work check](#) to ensure they have the BRP. A further check will be needed at the 3 year point to ensure they still have the right to work in the UK.

If the application is done inside the UK, the process is similar. The individual must complete an online application. Once this is done, they must go to a Visa Application Services service point to get their biometric information taken. This will provide the applicant with a BRP and you must follow the same schedule for right to work checks following this.

**[Get started with the Ukraine Family Scheme visa today.](#)**

## Homes for Ukraine Scheme

In short, this scheme allows both businesses and individuals to sponsor a named contact, or contacts, and provide them housing for at least six months.

### How does it work?

How the process works depends on whether you already have a named contact to sponsor. If you do, you must complete a visa application with details of the refugee and your business. The sponsored contact must have been living in Ukraine on or immediately before 1st January 2022, and currently be outside of the UK.

Once the application is processed, the individual will receive a letter confirming they may travel to the UK without a visa. The rest of the process will be the same as the Family Scheme. They'll receive a stamp giving them the right to work in the UK for six months. The individual will need to submit their biometric information to extend their stay up to 3 years via a BRP. As an employer you should conduct right to work checks during these deadlines.

**If you don't have a named contact, you can register your interest in being a sponsor, here:**

<https://www.gov.uk/register-interest-homes-ukraine>

If you do choose to sponsor an individual through this scheme, you must provide accommodation for them for at least 6 months. An offer of work is not sufficient on its own. The accommodation must meet certain standards.

### These are:

- 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 (further information on making a home safe from fire;
- 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);
- Have safe and working electrics, which a qualified electrician can help with if you are unsure;
- 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

## Standard Visa Scheme

If an individual cannot apply through one of the other schemes, they may take this route instead. If you are already a licensed sponsor, you may recruit Ukrainian national by allocating a certificate of sponsorship so they can work under a Skilled Worker visa. The vacancy itself would need to comply with the usual criteria involved in the points-based system.

For more information on this, [read our article on employing foreign nationals here.](#)

## Extending existing visas

Ukrainian nationals already working in the UK have the opportunity to extend their current visas. If the individual had permission to stay in the UK on, or before, 18th March 2022, they'll be able to do this via the Ukraine Extension Scheme. If their permission to stay has expired since 1st January 2022, they'll still be able to apply.

For further information on this, speak to one of our employment law experts on **0800 015 4939**.

## How to offer work to Ukrainian refugees

If you are an employer, and want to offer work to Ukrainian nationals, you start by informing the Home Office. friendly action plan.

## Business Safe Online

Secure, cloud-based software holds documents, planner's practical advice including: Task planner, Risk assessment tool, accident reporting.

This is separate from the Homes for Ukraine scheme. That means there is no obligation for you to provide accommodation to the individuals you employ. You can offer full time, part time, or voluntary roles. Whatever vacancies you do offer, the individual(s) must have the right to work in the UK. This means doing the appropriate checks.

**If you wish to offer work, you should send an email to [offerwork@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:offerwork@homeoffice.gov.uk) and provide this information:**

- Your company name and contact details
- How many roles you have available
- The location of the role (if it's local or national)
- A job description
- If the role is part-time, full-time or a different working pattern
- If English language qualifications are needed
- Any support you can offer - for example, relocation packages, mentoring or English lessons

### Support employing Ukrainian nationals

If you have questions regarding sponsorship, the right to work in the UK, or hiring foreign nationals, we can provide expert advice. Our consultants deal with recruitment and employment issues daily. Speak to one of them today on **0800 015 4939**.

# 2

## Integration



*So, you've decided to employ a Ukrainian national, but have concerns about integrating them into the business.*

What should you do to combat language barriers? What wellbeing support should you provide? How can you ensure they fit well within your company culture?

Here's the second part of our Ukrainian series, we'll take a look at how you can make integration smooth and provide support to your new staff member.

Top Tips:

## Introducing a Ukrainian Refugee Into Your Business

01

### Make Them Feel Welcome

Set up a social event so they can meet the people they'll be working with directly. Make sure they aren't too overwhelmed on their first day.



02

### Communicate With Existing Employees

Colleagues will play a key part in making them feel at home in the business. Make sure they have everything they need to support themselves and the new employee.



03

### Provide Relevant Training

If they're a non-native speaker, you could provide language lessons as part of their training. Otherwise, make sure they are trained on any systems you use.



04

### Run Through Your Policies

Making sure the new employee is aware of your policies and procedures will ensure they understand your company and how you expect everyone to behave.

05

### Check In Regularly

Arrange regular catchups so the individual can highlight any concerns they have or areas where they are struggling. Actively listen and action any issues they raise.





## Communication is key

In most cases, you won't know the entire history of the person you employ. However, if you employ a Ukrainian refugee, you know that they have recently experienced great upheaval.

The individual will have lost their home and may have recently lost friends or family members. They may still have loved ones in Ukraine that they are concerned for. Considering all of this, they might not be in the best headspace to start a brand-new role. This is why communication is key.

Any meetings you have with the individual should be supportive and frequent. This will help the staff member feel fully supported. It helps you anticipate any further support that may be required and help manage their workload if necessary. It will also allow them to feel comfortable raising concerns.

If you employ Ukrainian nationals on a visa, the crisis could have implications for their visa or right to work in the UK. Hold individual supportive meetings to address any potential issues, particularly if there are visas which are due to expire imminently.



## Talking about trauma and crisis

While it may be difficult, an open conversation around mental health is always the best approach to take. Trauma can have devastating implications if ignored. As an employer, it isn't your job to identify trauma. But, you do have a duty of care for your employees. That means it's your responsibility to recognise when someone is struggling and provide the relevant support.

If someone has experienced trauma, speaking to a professional is the best course of action. If you have an employee assistance programme, staff can access support through that. If not, you can refer them to occupational health.

When trauma and crisis are worked through and understood, recoveries are quicker. So, while you might not be directly involved with treatment, there are other ways you can help. Make sure your workforce know that they can approach you, HR, or a line manager when they are struggling. Email communications, company meetings, or posters around the workplace are all good ways to reinforce the message.

If an employee does approach you and opens up about trauma, actively listen to what they have to say. Discuss options moving forward, and how you can best support them at work.

## Language Barriers

It's possible that the person you employ may face a language barrier. There are some ways you can help ease the transition as they become settled.

### 01

#### Email Communications

In the initial stages of employment, allowing the individual to communicate via email as much as possible is advantageous. This is because they can use an online translator while they're still learning the language.



### 02

#### Contract

Get their contract of employment translated so that they can read the terms of their employment without misconception.

### 03

#### Assign a Contact

If you have someone to hand who is bilingual, then that's great. If not, at least assign a contact to the person so they can go and raise concerns with them as a first port of call.



### 04

#### Encouragement

The individual may feel they can perform their role with a base level of English. However, it's often worth encouraging improvement of the language so they communicate better with colleagues. You can even offer training if that's an option available to you.

### 05

#### English Lessons

These can be done within work hours and make up part of the essential training the individual needs to perform their role.



# 3

## Right to Work

***A Ukrainian national who hasn't applied for permission to stay in the UK doesn't have a right to work. While it's ultimately up to them to regularise their status, you can provide support as an employer.***

If you are currently employing a Ukrainian refugee you should stay abreast of their right to work. This will ensure you don't run into issues at key stages of their status in the UK.

Failing to conduct checks, or conducting them incorrectly, could result in a fine or penalty.

## **When to conduct a right to work check**

If the employee has come to the UK using the Ukraine Family Scheme, you should check their right to work before their first day of employment. You'll also need to check their right to work after six months. This is to ensure they have secured a biometric residence permit (BRP).

Once the employee has received this, you'll need to conduct a right to work check at the three year point. This is when their right to work may have ended.

If the employee has come to the UK using the Homes for Ukraine Scheme the dates are the same. You should conduct a right to work check after six months and again at the three year mark.

If a Ukrainian national was already employed, you should conduct a right to work check when they come to extend their current visa.

## **How to conduct a right to work check**

The new digital technology for checking right to work came into force in April 2022. This is slightly different from the temporary adjusted coronavirus digital checks, and it has its own process (we'll detail the process below).

### **To use the service you'll need a few things to begin:**

- The individuals' date of birth
- Their share code
- A photograph of the individual

You can [\*\*obtain the above details here.\*\*](#)

Then, you'll need to collect evidence of the individual's right to work.

If you're performing a check before the six month deadline, a passport with a six month entry stamp can be used as evidence of right to work. If the individual doesn't have a valid Ukrainian passport, they may be provided a 'Form for Affixing the Vias' (FAV). This can be used a proof of their right to work in conjunction with a Positive Verification Notice from the Home Office. Otherwise, they should have a BRP which will serve as sufficient evidence.

Make sure you gather all the relevant documents you need. This includes the original right to work document. Check that they are genuine and accurate. Once this is done you should keep a secure, dated copy of each for subsequent checks.

Then, make your way to the [government portal here](#), and follow the directions given.

**Note:** The decision to remove digital right to work checks has been delayed until 30th September 2022. However, there are plans to implement online checks permanently. Stay up to date with employment law to ensure you stay abreast of any changes to this date.

## Help supporting a Ukrainian refugee at work

There are many ways you can support a Ukrainian national in your workplace. Whether you want to provide additional training, or integrate them better with their colleagues, we can help. Our HR consultants are expert mediators and can even conduct meetings on your behalf. Call today to find out how we can support you and your staff on **0800 015 4939**.

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## Support employing Ukrainian Nationals

Employing people always has its challenges. These can be amplified when there is a language barrier or you need to make unfamiliar checks. Fortunately, you can access expert advice when navigating these issues.

At Croner, we have a team of legal experts and HR consultants ready to take your call and guide you through the process. If you're looking for some support, give us a call today for free initial advice on **0800 015 4939**.



## Let's talk

**t:** 0800 015 4939

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