

Homes for Ukraine scheme to begin processing applications from unaccompanied children

- Children who have already applied for a Homes for Ukraine Scheme visa will be allowed to travel to the UK without a parent or legal guardian, subject to strict sponsor checks
- As part of robust safeguarding regime applicants must also have notarised parental consent, the sponsor should be personally known to the parents, except in exceptional circumstances

The [Homes for Ukraine scheme](#) will allow children and minors under the age of 18 who have already applied through the Homes for Ukraine Scheme to come to the UK without a parent or guardian, the government announced today (22 June 2022).

After working closely with the Ukraine government, the changes will enable a child to apply for a visa if they have proof of parental consent. This must be certified by an authority approved by the Ukraine government, such as the Ukrainian consul abroad.

Extensive sponsor checks will also be carried out by local authorities ahead of any visa being granted, with councils able to veto any sponsor arrangements they deem unsuitable.

The sponsor should also, except in exceptional circumstances, be someone who is personally known to the parents.

This policy will initially apply to the 1,000 children who have already applied but are unable to travel as they are not travelling or reuniting with a parent or guardian.

Lord Harrington, Minister for Refugees, said:

“We have seen the demand for allowing children to travel on the Homes for Ukraine scheme with parental consent. We have seen many applications where families want their children to travel to safety in the UK but where parents cannot travel with them.”

“We understand families are having to make difficult decisions to separate from their children where it is in their best interest, which is why we have extended the Homes for Ukraine scheme to allow this.”

“It is important we took the time to get this right – we have worked across

government and with the Ukrainian government to find a solution to ensure we can continue offering safety to as many Ukrainians as possible while also welcoming more children into the UK.”

In recognition of the need to give children greater security, sponsors will be asked to commit to hosting for up to 3 years, or until they are aged 18 and the sponsorship has lasted 6 months – in line with the existing commitment for sponsors of adults or parents with their children.

Further security checks will be introduced for this cohort to ensure the wellbeing and safety of minors. DBS checks must be completed on the sponsor and adults in the sponsor household, before any visa is issued by the Home Office.

In cases where a sponsor is not related to the child, an enhanced DBS with barred list check will be required in advance of issuing the visa.

Councils will have the ability to veto a sponsor if they deem them unsuitable and will be asked to undertake regular checks on the child. Councils will be able to use existing statutory powers to protect the child’s wellbeing where there are concerns.

Families hosting a child under the Homes for Ukraine scheme will receive £350 a month as a ‘thank you’ payment and all those arriving under the scheme will receive full access to education, healthcare and public services. Local authorities will receive £10,500 per child, as well as additional government funding to provide education and childcare services for children on a per pupil basis.

Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi said:

“Schools and local authorities continue to make a herculean effort to support Ukrainian families fleeing from their home country, and I urge them to keep going.”

“I am determined that children who have been forced from their homes by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine do not have their life chances spoiled as a result and that is why we must do all we can to ensure they benefit from our incredible schools.”

The government will be writing imminently to the person who has been named on the applications of under 18s with further detail on the eligibility and requirements, ahead of the scheme opening.

The government has established two new visa schemes to support those fleeing Putin’s war. Already more than 77,400 Ukrainians have arrived safely in the UK since both schemes launched and 88,000 visas have been issued through Homes for Ukraine.

When the Homes for Ukraine scheme launched in March, children or minors under

the age of 18 were not eligible unless they were applying with, or planning to reunite in the UK with, a parent or legal guardian.

Despite this around 1,000 under 18s applied for the scheme. These applications have been on hold with the Home Office while the government carefully worked through the concerns around allowing children to apply for the Homes for Ukraine scheme without a parent or legal guardian.