

# Public urged to 'represent the very best of British community spirit' and sponsor people from Ukraine

- Today marks the 31st Anniversary of Ukraine Independence Day and 6 months since the start of the war
- More than 115,000 people from Ukraine have arrived in the UK under the government's Ukraine visa schemes
- As war rages on the government is calling on more people to volunteer at home as sponsors

As the people of Ukraine celebrate their Independence Day, the UK government is calling for more people to come forward to help house Ukrainians fleeing the war.

Thanks to the good will and generosity of tens of thousands of people, more than 115,000 Ukrainians have been given safety in the UK so far through both the family and sponsorship schemes. This huge collective and community effort represents the UK's biggest offer to shelter for people fleeing war since 1946. But with the Putin's barbaric invasion continuing, many Ukrainians are still looking for a place of safety in homes right across the UK.

Those interested in becoming sponsors for the Homes for Ukraine scheme can find out more information and [record their interest online](#).

Those interested in finding somebody to host can contact [recognised providers listed online](#) who help provide support and guidance on becoming a sponsor, and can help people safely find a match. A record of interest will also be shared with the local authority who may make contact to discuss where there is a need for sponsors in the area.

Alison Edwards, host said:

We are delighted to have met our lovely Ukrainian guest, even though the opportunity arose for the worst reasons. We feel so grateful that our guest has joined us; by chance we share many interests and our children have so enjoyed spending time with our guest. We feel we have a new honorary family member from Ukraine. Our lovely guest has brought warmth and humour. Our thoughts are with her relatives in Ukraine and we have so many hopes for our guest's future.

This country has committed to providing Ukrainians with a home while they are here in the UK. Some guests may need a new place to stay after 6 months and new sponsors who step forward will help local authorities ensure people have somewhere to plant roots in the community.

The government is providing £10,500 per person under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme to councils to enable them to provide support to families to rebuild their lives and plant roots in the community. Within the £10,500 is a one-off £200 payment that councils will provide to each Ukraine guest upon arrival plus the £350 'thank you' monthly payment for sponsors for costs associated with helping out.

Around 3 out of 4 existing hosts say they want to continue supporting their Ukrainian guests but where people cannot continue hosting new offers of places to live are needed for Ukrainians already in the UK. In these cases councils are offering a rematching service to find a new sponsor in cases under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Refugees Minister Lord Harrington said:

Today marks two sombre and important chapters in Ukraine's rich history – 31 years since the proud nation declared independence and 6 months since Russian tanks rolled across the border.

The United Kingdom has been unwavering in its support and we continue to stand shoulder to shoulder as more than 115,000 people arrive from Ukraine, our biggest offer of sanctuary to people fleeing war since 1946.

Those who have chosen to sponsor Ukrainians represent the very best of British community spirit and generosity and I would urge anyone who has the room to come forward and join thousands of others in providing a safe haven for people forced to leave their country.

The ONS recently surveyed sponsors about their experiences with the Homes for Ukraine Scheme and the results show the vast majority of people want to provide support for longer than 6 months, which is a testament to the goodwill and generosity of the British people. They will of course continue to receive £350 'thank you' payments up to 6 months and the Ukrainians they sponsor have the right to work and to access benefits and public services, including education and healthcare, from day one.

Devolved governments, charities, faith groups, businesses, councils and communities have all worked in lock step to provide much needed support to those arriving from Ukraine.

- If you want to get started immediately on finding someone to host, you can contact one of our [Recognised Providers](#).
- A record of your interest will also be shared with your local authority who may contact you to discuss where there is a need for sponsors in your area.
- The government has established 3 new visa schemes to support those fleeing Putin's war: the [Ukraine Family Scheme](#), the [Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme](#) and the [Ukraine Extension Scheme](#).
- Ukrainians who have arrived in the UK and were given 6 months leave

should ensure they take action to extend their stay to up to 3 years if they have not already done so. They can do this on GOV.UK, though Ukrainians who have already enrolled their biometrics, and collected their biometric residence permit (BRP) do not need to take any further action.

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## [UK and Ukraine launch talks on digital trade deal to support Ukrainian businesses](#)

- New agreement will remove barriers to digital trade, providing much needed support for Ukrainian jobs and livelihoods following Russia's invasion
- Announcement follows a direct request from Ukraine's government and comes on Ukrainian Independence Day [Wednesday 24 August]
- Move follows UK's decision to cut tariffs on all goods from Ukraine to zero under existing UK-Ukraine free trade agreement

The UK and Ukraine have announced their intention to pursue a new digital trade agreement to help Ukraine rebuild its economy and protect livelihoods following Russia's invasion.

International Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan met with First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy of Ukraine Yuliia Svyrydenko and Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Digital Transformation of Ukraine Mykhailo Fedorov virtually and Ukrainian Ambassador to the UK Vadym Prystaiko in person in London [on Tuesday 23 August] to reiterate the UK's unwavering support for Ukraine and begin talks.

The digital trade agreement will aim to support Ukrainian businesses by cutting red tape and helping them to trade with the UK more efficiently through technology such as electronic transactions, e-signatures, and e-contracts.

It will also make it easier for UK companies to work with Ukrainian businesses and support with their economic recovery. Total trade between the UK and Ukraine was worth £1.9 billion in 2021 and UK exports of digitally delivered services accounted for 73% of all UK services exports to Ukraine in 2020.

### **International Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:**

Putin's brutal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has had devastating human consequences. The UK stands shoulder to shoulder

with Ukraine and will use trade as a force for good to help the country rebuild its modern economy after this barbaric war.

Our partnership with Ukraine will help them seize the brighter days ahead, and we will continue to do everything in our power to protect Ukrainian jobs, livelihoods and families.

**Vadym Prystaiko, Ambassador of Ukraine to the United Kingdom said:**

The United Kingdom has shown unwavering support throughout this illegal invasion and the ties between our governments have never been closer.

While we fight fearlessly for the freedom of our nation, many Ukrainians also look ahead to how we will rebuild our country. Strengthening our economic ties through this landmark digital trade agreement will support our IT industry, which is set to become a major driver of economic growth for our businesses and cities.

Today's announcement comes following a direct request from President Zelenskyy's government. The Ukrainian government has identified supporting the digital economy as one of its areas of focus for the recovery and reconstruction of the country. The UK, as a global leader in digital trade, is well placed to help with that.

It follows the UK's removal of all tariffs under the existing UK-Ukraine free trade agreement in May, supporting Ukrainian businesses and producers to export goods and rebuild their economy. A new digital trade agreement would further strengthen our trading relationship, providing additional and much-needed economic support for businesses in Ukraine.

In July the Trade Secretary also launched a new UK-Ukraine Infrastructure Taskforce, which is building partnerships between UK and Ukrainian businesses to help repair damaged and destroyed infrastructure including bridges and homes in and around Kyiv.

The UK has also introduced one of the largest and most severe packages of economic sanctions against Russia. Measures cover over £18 billion worth of products that were traded with Russia in 2021, as well as over 1,000 individuals and over 100 entities in key sectors such as defence.

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# Calling on Russia to return full control of all Ukraine's nuclear facilities to their rightful sovereign owner: UK statement at UN Security Council

Thank you Mr President and thank you to Under-Secretary-General Di Carlo for this briefing.

The United Kingdom remains gravely concerned about the implications for nuclear safety, security and safeguards of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine.

Russia's invasion has disrupted the operation of nuclear facilities across Ukraine, posed a grave threat to operational safety, and prevented Ukrainian authorities from carrying out routine safeguards tasks.

Instead of calling yet another meeting on the crisis at Zaporizhzhia, Russia could resolve it immediately by withdrawing its forces from the plant, and all of Ukraine, and ceasing its senseless aggression. As well as causing untold suffering to the Ukrainian people, the simple fact is that Russia's invasion – and its efforts to seize by force Ukraine's nuclear plants – has jeopardised the safety of millions in the region who would be affected by a nuclear incident in Ukraine.

Meanwhile, important nuclear safety and safeguards activities at the site are needed more than ever. We welcome progress towards an IAEA technical visit. Any visit should take place in a manner that respects Ukraine's sovereignty over its territory. The Secretary General has been clear that the UN can facilitate a visit from the Ukrainian side, and we welcome his and the UN's engagement. We also welcome the efforts of the Ukrainian administration, and of IAEA staff to plan and support a mission, and call upon Russia to provide appropriate security guarantees.

We commend the heroic efforts of Ukrainian staff operating the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, despite the great pressure they are under. They must be allowed to carry out their duties without threats or further disruption. Cutting off a major supply of electricity to the people of Ukraine would cause further immense suffering. As USG Di Carlo said today, the electricity at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant belongs to Ukraine.

Russia's war is reckless and irresponsible. A nuclear disaster should be unthinkable, and no member of the United Nations – let alone a permanent member of this Council – should bring about that threat by seeking to take another country's nuclear facilities by force. Russia's actions are contrary to the principles of the Convention of Nuclear Safety and other international

nuclear safety conventions. So we call once more upon Russia to return full control of all Ukraine's nuclear facilities to their rightful sovereign owner to ensure their safe and secure operation.

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## **British Ambassador visits Huehuetenango and Quiche**

In Huehuetenango, Ambassador Whittingham met with the Governor, Jose Juan De León, and the Major of Huehuetenango, Gustavo Cano, to address the economic portfolio in the Department. They discussed challenges and possible opportunities offered in services, tourism and other areas for UK companies wishing to invest in this region in the future.

Ambassador Whittingham invited local leaders to continue seizing the opportunities of the UK-Central American Association Agreement, which is now under its second year of implementation and has helped to increase Guatemalan exports to the UK. He also stressed the importance of continue improving transparency and rule of law to create a proper environment for investors to come.

While in Huehuetenango, the Ambassador also visited the local offices of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), which has the objective of expanding attention to the population requesting refugee status, refugees, in transit, host communities and Guatemalan people in vulnerable situations.

In Quiche, the Ambassador met with the association of local journalists "Prensa Comunitaria", to highlight the UK's commitment to promoting media freedom and the importance of community and investigative journalism in real time from the different regions of the country. The Ambassador also held a meeting with the Governor of Quiche, Ervin Macz Hó.

While in Quiche, the Ambassador visited Bosques de Lemoa Reserve, a forest reserve in Quiche, which has approximately 30,000 trees and was one of the four initiatives recognised by the British Embassy and Prensa Libre in 2021 for its positive impact on environmental protection. Tackling climate change remain a global top UK priority and the Embassy wants to continue working with Guatemalan partners on this issue.

Ambassador Whittingham held meetings with indigenous leaders from both departments to understand more about the challenges and opportunities they seek to promote their participation, development and inclusion and how the British Embassy can support these efforts. The continuous coordination between the local government and the indigenous authorities is fundamental for the development of the communities and the prosperity of this region.

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## Platinum Jubilee Rug unveiled at Ulster Carpets

Dundonald Primary School pupil Emily McMullan (11), was announced as the winner of the competition by Minister of State Conor Burns in June, and met with Ulster Carpets designers to learn how her design was being turned into a special gift for Her Majesty the Queen.

Emily's design, featuring some of Northern Ireland's most iconic landmarks such as Samson and Goliath in Belfast and the North Coast's Giant's Causeway, was woven into a rug by Ulster Carpets' expert team, and unveiled by Emily and Minister of State Conor Burns at the manufacturing company's Portadown headquarters on Tuesday 23 August.

Emily's postcard to the Queen was chosen from over 2000 colourful and creative entries, with primary schools across Northern Ireland offered the opportunity to take part in a unique design competition as part of this year's Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

The specially designed Jubilee rug will be delivered to Her Majesty the Queen as a gift from the children of Northern Ireland in her Jubilee year and Emily will also receive her own copy of the rug as a lasting memory of the important role that she has played in helping Her Majesty celebrate her Platinum Jubilee.

### **Speaking about seeing the rug, competition winner Emily McMullan said:**

"It's amazing to see all of the places that remind me of home being made into a gift for Her Majesty the Queen. I still can't believe that something I designed in art class is now being delivered to the Queen!

"It has been great learning from the designers at Ulster Carpets about how they turn art into rugs and carpets. It is something that I will never forget and I think I would like to be a designer in the future."

### **Speaking after the visit, Minister of State Conor Burns said:**

'It seems like only a few weeks ago when I was on the phone to Nick from a primary school in Bournemouth. I told him I'd had an idea and asked him to tell me honestly if it was crazy. Thankfully Nick and his team at Ulster Carpets are as open minded as they are creative. Nick said let's do it. So the Platinum Jubilee Rug Competition was conceived.

"Little did I imagine then that it would be embraced so wholeheartedly by Northern Ireland's young people. Yet the entries flooded in – over 2000 from schools of every kind in every county. Emily, her fellow finalists and indeed

every child who entered can be incredibly proud of their designs.

“They have captured the natural and built wonder of this amazing place. Today I have seen the finished product and it is beyond my wildest dreams. We asked the young people to design a rug on the theme ‘a postcard from Northern Ireland’. What they did and Ulster carpets have produced is literally a gift fit for the Queen.

“I am bursting with pride in what these wonderful young people – the future of Northern Ireland – have done and I thank them sincerely.”

**Group Managing Director of Ulster Carpets Nick Coburn said:**

“It has been a great privilege to be involved in the NI0’s Platinum Jubilee design competition and to have the honour of manufacturing a rug for Her Majesty the Queen, particularly in the same year as we received the Royal Warrant.

“The designs created by schoolchildren from across Northern Ireland demonstrate the immense artistic talent that we have in our country. As we look to the future, it is reassuring to know that Ulster Carpets can transform this potential into the carpet designers of the future.”