



Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP

*Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and
Communities*

Minister for Intergovernmental Relations

**Department for Levelling Up, Housing and
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Dear Leader,

Humanitarian crisis in Ukraine

As a result of Putin's devastating, indefensible invasion, we are now facing the greatest crisis in Europe since the end of the Second World War. This Government is determined to do everything in our power to help those fleeing heart-breaking scenes that we never thought to see again on the Continent.

In local government, I know that you are standing ready to support the national effort needed to welcome Ukrainian arrivals, and your role will, as ever, be critical in responding to this crisis. You have already demonstrated your commitment and expertise through your support for Syrian, Afghan and Hong Kong BNO schemes – it is this we must draw on again to rise to this new humanitarian emergency.

'Homes for Ukraine'

The Government has already put in place a rigorous sanctions regime targeted at the property and assets of those supporting the Putin regime and are providing extensive support to neighbouring countries to support the enormous numbers of displaced people. We have expanded the Family Sponsorship scheme and today I am announcing a new sponsorship scheme, 'Homes for Ukraine'.

This scheme will allow Ukrainians (and their immediate family members) with no family ties to the UK to be sponsored by individuals or organisations who can offer them a home such as a spare room or unoccupied residential self-contained unit. The scheme will be uncapped. Beneficiaries will be able to live and work in the UK for up to three years and also access benefits, healthcare, employment and other support. Our aim, through this route, is to offer a safe, warm welcome to as many arrivals as possible, based on the number of sponsors who come forward.

Sponsor requirements

Sponsors can be of any nationality, with any immigration status, provided they have at least six months' leave to remain within the UK. In the first phase of the scheme, sponsors will need to have a named person whom they wish to sponsor. This could be a friend, someone they are already connected with, or it could be someone they have been linked with by a charity, faith group or other organisation. The visa application route will go live on Friday 18 March.

We are asking that sponsors provide accommodation for a minimum of six months. We appreciate people's generosity and do know there will be costs associated with helping out – so we are offering an optional 'thank you' payment of £350 per month to people who can accommodate one or more household (subject to the accommodation they have) for up to 12 months. This thank you payment is limited to one payment per residential address. Our intention is that these payments will be tax free for individuals and will not affect benefit entitlement and will legislate if necessary. Sponsors should not charge rent. They will not be expected to cover the costs of food and living expenses, although they may wish to offer this philanthropically.

We want to minimise bureaucracy and make the process as straightforward as possible while ensuring the safety of all involved. Those arriving will therefore need to meet standard security checks. Sponsors and all adults in the sponsoring households will also be subject to security checks and may be subject to safeguarding checks too.

Launch of Expression of Interest Webpage

Today we are asking individuals, charities, community groups and businesses across the country to step forward and offer their support to thousands of people displaced from Ukraine, and their immediate family members, who need a route to safety. I am urging anyone who is in a position to help, who fulfils the sponsorship requirements above and with a spare room or empty home, to step up and join this national effort. They can record their interest at www.gov.uk/homes-for-ukraine from today to receive updates and more information on how to apply. Then on Friday 18 March, Phase One of the visa application route will open for sponsors and named contacts to apply to the scheme.

We envisage that Homes for Ukraine will initially be used by those with known connections. Over time, we expect to see the scheme develop further, through our work with charities, faith groups and community groups.

Local authority support

I would like to thank local government colleagues that have worked so intensively with my officials on the fundamentals of this scheme, building on our recent experience with the pandemic and Afghan resettlement programme. We will of course continue to work closely together to support those on the Afghan and other programmes in parallel to opening up our support for the Ukrainian people.

For those arriving via the Homes for Ukraine scheme, I know that you want to play your part in supporting people who have been through so much to feel at home in the UK. I am committed to working with you to achieve this and also to provide a full wraparound service that also encompasses sponsors. As such, we will be providing substantial level of funding at a rate of £10,500 per person to local authorities, with an additional top-up for child education, to enable them to provide much wider support to families to rebuild their lives and fully integrate into communities. Further details will be shared shortly. You will have questions on the detail of the scheme which we will endeavour to answer through guidance published in the coming days. We will continue to listen to your feedback as we get this new scheme off the ground to ensure it works effectively for you, sponsors and beneficiaries.

Our country has a long and proud history of supporting the most vulnerable during their darkest hour. We are doing so again with Homes for Ukraine as part of a wide-ranging package of sponsorship routes and support for those who never could have imagined, less than three weeks ago, that they would be fleeing for their lives and leaving behind everything they have known and loved. Thank you for your support with this vital national effort.

With every good wish,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Gove". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and a long, sweeping underline.

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and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations**