



Home Office

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Councillor David Rouane
Leader
South Oxfordshire District Council
Abbey House
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8 April 2024

Dear Councillor Rouane,

Thank you for your letter of 19 March 2024 regarding a route to settlement for Ukrainians here in the UK under one of our Ukraine schemes.

May I begin by reiterating that the UK, together with our partners and allies, stands in complete solidarity with Ukraine and we condemn the Russian government's unprovoked and premeditated war against Ukraine. We strongly believe Ukraine will be safe again and we will continue to support the Ukrainian government for as long as it is necessary in their efforts against Putin.

As you are aware, the first visas providing sanctuary were issued in March 2022 and are due to expire in March 2025. Two years on from the start of the conflict, we continue to stand firm with the people of Ukraine and show that those who need our help are still warmly welcomed in the UK. The British people have shown incredible generosity to, and solidarity with, the Ukrainian people, opening their homes to those seeking sanctuary. To date, the UK has offered, or extended sanctuary to, over 280,000 Ukrainians and their families under one of the three Ukraine schemes - the Ukraine Family Scheme, the Homes for Ukraine scheme, or the Ukraine Extension Scheme; an effort about which we are all rightly proud.

We have therefore announced our intention to allow Ukrainians provided with sanctuary in the UK under the Ukraine schemes to apply for further permission to remain in the UK through a bespoke Ukraine Permission Extension (UPE) scheme. I would like to reassure you that we are developing plans to work with relevant stakeholders to communicate these changes to landlords and employers, to support the stability of Ukrainian guests in these areas.

I should clarify that the announcement also recognises the Ukrainian government's strong desire for the future repatriation of its citizens to help rebuild Ukraine when it is safe to do

so, whilst in the meantime allowing them to develop their lives in the UK in anticipation of the time when that country will again be safe for them and their families. It is important that our approach respects these wishes and therefore our offer of sanctuary remains temporary in nature and does not lead to settlement in the UK.

In doing so, we have become one of the first countries among a number of international partners to respond to the need for certainty on behalf of Ukrainians who are away from their home country. Applications for the new UPE scheme will open in early 2025, in advance of the expiry of the first Ukraine scheme visas in March 2025, providing sufficient time for the individuals to apply. The UPE scheme will provide the same rights and entitlements to access work, benefits, healthcare and education, including a waiver from the Immigration Health Surcharge, that Ukrainians have benefitted from under the existing schemes. Further details on the eligibility and application processes will be available before the scheme opens for applications at the beginning of next year.

We will of course continue to keep the Ukraine schemes under consistent review in line with developments in the ongoing war. I would also like to thank your local authority and its residents for their unstinting support for our Ukrainian guests at their time of need.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to write and I trust that this reply is helpful in clarifying matters.

Yours sincerely,



Tom Pursglove MP
Minister of State for Legal Migration and the Border