

Benefit (financial) support and entitlements for people from Ukraine arriving in the UK

Introduction

The council will provide all the help and support we can for you while you are in the UK.

Emergency regulations are in place so that you can get financial support from the government – known in the UK as ‘benefits’ – immediately, without the usual residence or public funds restrictions. You can claim the full range of health and social security benefits from **day one of your arrival** and can live and work in the UK for up to three years.

You are covered by these special rules if you are a Ukrainian national or their immediate family member (for example spouse, partner, or child under 18) and have recently arrived in the UK but were living in Ukraine immediately before 1 January 2022. These rules also extend to some non-Ukrainian nationals who left the country after the Russian invasion and were residents before 1 January 2022.

Translation services are available if you need to claim benefits and need advice in your own language. A telephone interpreter can be arranged for you if you do not have access to your own. More details about translation services are explained below.

If you are being sponsored or have entered the UK under the Ukraine Family Scheme and your sponsor or family member needs advice, they can call our Public Advice Line on **020 8921 6375** (open Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 10am to 1pm). Sponsors can also view our separate factsheet: Benefits and entitlements if you are sponsoring someone under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

The British Red Cross also have a helpful advice booklet in Ukrainian – view it here: royalgreenwich.gov.uk/red-cross-help-for-refugees

The main benefits you can claim

This section summarises the main benefits you may be able to claim.

Each benefit has different rules. For example, some benefits are only for people of working age on low incomes. Others are for people who have reached state pension age (currently 66), have long-term health problems, or are disabled and need extra help looking after themselves.

You will need to open a UK bank account to receive benefits. This can take a long time, so please start the process as soon as you can. However, your first payment can be made by voucher if you don't already have a bank account set up.

You will normally need identification, proof of address and immigration status to open a bank account. However, some UK banks have account options where you don't need a permanent address or have put special provisions in place for arrivals from Ukraine - see the list below. Visit the Money Helper website royalgreenwich.gov.uk/money-helper for more information on choosing a bank account for your benefit payments.

Banks with schemes for Ukrainians:

- [Lloyds Bank](https://lloydsbank.com/help-guidance/ukraine-support) lloydsbank.com/help-guidance/ukraine-support
- [HSBC Basic Bank Account](https://hsbc.co.uk/current-accounts/products/basic-bank-account) hsbc.co.uk/current-accounts/products/basic-bank-account
- [Royal Bank of Scotland](https://rbs.co.uk/ukraine-refugees) rbs.co.uk/ukraine-refugees
- [Santander](https://santander.co.uk/personal/ukraine-support) santander.co.uk/personal/ukraine-support



As a new arrival to the UK, you may be unfamiliar with the system and what your rights and responsibilities are when claiming benefits, so please call our Welfare Rights Service Public Advice Line on **020 8921 6375** for benefits advice and support if you need it (open Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 10am to 1pm).

Universal Credit

Universal Credit (UC) is the main source of support for people of working age on low incomes who are unable to work (for example due to illness/disability or caring responsibilities) or who are looking for work but have not yet found a job. It covers living expenses like food, fuel, and other household expenses. UC also includes support for adults, children, and housing costs, and is paid into your bank account by the government in single monthly payments. The amount you get is based on your income, savings, how many people are in your household and their circumstances each month. If you have savings and assets, this must not be more than £16,000 to qualify.

Extra amounts may also be included if you have an illness or disability that makes it difficult for you to work, caring responsibilities, or if you pay for childcare while you work (conditions apply for all of these - read more here: gov.uk/universal-credit/what-youll-get).

You can apply for Universal Credit online (gov.uk/apply-universal-credit) or by calling the Universal Credit helpline **0800 328 5644** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm). You may need to attend an appointment at a local benefit office called a 'jobcentre'. You will meet your 'work coach' who will go through the claim with you and help you apply for a national insurance number if necessary - this is a unique personal number you need to work (gov.uk/national-insurance/your-national-insurance-number). You can ask for an interpreter if you need one.

- **Support to make or manage a UC claim**

Call The Help To Claim Telephone Service on **0800 144 8444** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm) for help with your application. They will also arrange to speak to you through an interpreter if needed, use this link for more information: gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-universal-credit-and-other-benefits-homes-for-ukraine

Most people manage their claims online. Please contact Royal Greenwich's Universal Support Team if you need help with managing your claim online by calling **020 8921 3333** (Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm).

- **Couples**

If you're joining your partner in the UK and they are already claiming UC, they will need to notify UC and their claim will end. You will need to make a new claim as a couple and your entitlement will be assessed based on your joint income, savings, and circumstances. The new claim will take up to five weeks to be put into payment.

- **Support while you're waiting for your first UC payment**

It takes up to five weeks for the first payment to come through. You can apply to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for an advance payment if you are struggling and need urgent financial support (gov.uk/guidance/universal-credit-advances). However, this is a loan that will have to be repaid once your UC claim comes through and will reduce your future payments.

Alternatively, you can contact the Council to check if you can get a non-repayable cash grant called an 'emergency support payment' while you are waiting for your first UC payment. More information on this scheme can be found here: royalgreenwich.gov.uk/ess. If you have questions about UC, call our Welfare Rights Service Public Advice Line for Royal Greenwich residents on **020 8921 6375** (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, 10am to 1pm). Further information is also available on the Royal Greenwich website (royalgreenwich.gov.uk/universalcredit).

Financial support for parents with a child under 16 (or under 20 and in education or training)

Universal Credit

If you are entitled to Universal Credit, the assessment will normally include support for up to two children.

Child Benefit

This is extra money to help with the cost of bringing up a child. You can claim Child Benefit for all your children - there are no limits on how many you can claim for. Anyone can claim Child Benefit and it doesn't matter how much savings you have. However, a Child Benefit tax charge applies for people earning over £50,000 a year.

Claim online or complete a CH2 form to claim and send it with supporting documents to:

Child Benefit Office (GB)
Washington
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE88 1ZD

Visit the GOV.UK website for more information (gov.uk/child-benefit/how-to-claim).

Clothing, free school meals for school-aged children

If you have school-aged children, you can get free school meals if your child is either:

- in reception or year 1 or 2 at school (regardless of income)
- in year 3 or above and you're receiving certain low-income benefits.

Check what school year your child is in here: schoolwix.com/uk

Free school meals are also being extended to all primary school children in London for one year from September 2023.

You may also be able to get help towards the cost of school clothing if you're on a low income and your child is in reception or years 3, 7 or 9 in school.

Find out more and apply for support online by completing this form on the Royal Greenwich website: royalgreenwich.gov.uk/xfp/form/613

Free milk, fruit, vegetables, and vitamins

Healthy Start is a government welfare food scheme that provides free infant formula, fresh, canned, or frozen fruit and vegetables and vitamins. You can get this if you are on a low income and are at least 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under four years old in your household. You will be given a prepaid card that is topped up every four weeks, which can be used in any store accepting MasterCard payments (including supermarkets, markets, convenience/grocery stores and pharmacies). Use this link for more information and to apply:

royalgreenwich.gov.uk/apply-for-healthy-start

Financial support for older people

Pension Credit

Pension Credit is the main source of financial help for pensioners on low incomes and guarantees people aged 66 or over a minimum weekly income.

If you are part of a couple, you both need to be over state pension age currently (66+) to qualify. Check your state pension age using this link: gov.uk/state-pension-age

There is no limit on how much savings you can have to qualify, but savings of over £10,000 will affect how much Pension Credit you can get. You may qualify if your weekly income is less than £201.65 a week if you are a single person or £306.85 for couples (April 2023/24 rates). You may still get help even if your income is higher than this. For example, if you or your partner receive disability benefits or are a carer.

The Older Person's Freedom Pass

The Freedom Pass allows free travel for older people on London's public transport. Anyone aged over 66 can get one. Use the eligibility checker on the London Councils website to check if you qualify

(londoncouncils.gov.uk/services/freedom-pass)

Apply online (recommended) or by post at a main post office. For more information visit the Freedom Pass website (secure.freedompass.org/account/apply).

If you are aged 60+ but have not yet reached state pension age (66+), you can apply for a 60+ London Oyster photocard. This provides free travel on public transport in London.

- Read more about state pension age here: gov.uk/state-pension-age
- Visit the Transport for London website for more information and to apply online: tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel/60-plus-oyster-photocard

Extra financial help if you or someone in your household has health issues or a disability

Universal Credit

You may get extra Universal Credit if your ability to work is limited by a health condition or disability. You will need to have an assessment called a 'work capability assessment' and complete a UC50 form.

Tell your work coach at the jobcentre about all the difficulties you have in finding work due to your physical or mental health condition or disability. They should make reasonable adjustments to ensure that you have the support you need to manage your claim. This might include offering telephone appointments or reducing the number of jobs you're expected to look for. Please contact the Welfare Rights Service Public Advice Line (**020 8921 6375**) if you need further advice about this process.

Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

This is a benefit for people with a long-term health condition or disability.

You may qualify for PIP if you:

- are aged 16 or over but have not yet reached state pension age; and
- have a disability or long-term health condition and need a lot of help looking after yourself; or
- need supervision to keep you safe; or
- have mobility difficulties.

You can get PIP regardless of how much income or savings you have. You can start your claims by calling **0800 917 2222** (open Monday – Friday, 8am to 5pm) - someone else can do this for you, but you will need to be present during the phone call. You will also need to complete a more detailed form which will be sent to you later once you have checked and returned the initial form.

If you need further advice or support with filling out the form, call the **Public Advice Line** on **020 8921 6375** (open Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 10am to 1pm).

View our Personal Independence Payment factsheet here to find out more: royalgreenwich.gov.uk/personal-independence-payment

Attendance Allowance

This is a similar benefit for people who have reached state pension age. Call 0800 731 0122 (open Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm) to request a paper form. View our Attendance Allowance factsheet to find out more:

royalgreenwich.gov.uk/attendance-allowance

Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

DLA is the equivalent benefit for children under 16 who need much more looking after than a child of the same age without their health condition or disability. Call **0800 121 4600** (open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) to request a form. View our Disability Living Allowance factsheet to find out more: royalgreenwich.gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-for-children

People who are terminally ill

Special rules allow claims from people who are terminally ill to be fast tracked and paid at the highest rate - call the Public Advice Line on **020 8921 6375** (open Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 10am to 1pm) for advice.

Help with transport costs if you receive a qualifying disability benefit

Sources of help with transport costs depending on your circumstances include:

- Blue Badge - this is a government scheme to enable people with mobility difficulties to park closer to their destination.
- Vehicle Excise Duty (road tax) exemption.
- Disabled Persons Freedom Pass and the Taxicard Scheme.

Contact the council's mobility team for more information on 020 8921 2387 or email mobility-duty@royalgreenwich.gov.uk. The Royal Greenwich website also includes more information about these schemes here: royalgreenwich.gov.uk/info/200260/public_transport/1493/travel_schemes_for_older_and_disabled_people

If you care for someone with health problems or a disability

You may qualify for a benefit called Carer's Allowance or an extra amount in your Universal Credit if the person you look after starts receiving certain rates of Personal Independence Payment, Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance. You can find more information in our Benefits for carers factsheet here:

royalgreenwich.gov.uk/benefits-for-carers

If you have housing costs

If you are a tenant and unable to pay your rent, you could qualify for Universal Credit to help cover your housing costs. Your sponsor should not be charging you rent if you entered the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

You will generally not be liable to pay rent if you are living with family members temporarily. However, if your family member receives low-income benefits, the amount they get may be reduced if other adults live with them because the benefit rules assume that they will be contributing towards the housing costs. There are some situations in which benefits will not be reduced, so your family should find out and get advice.

If you are liable to pay housing costs you will need to claim Housing Benefit if you have reached state pension age, or if you are living in certain types of accommodation, like temporary accommodation provided by the council.

Find out more here:

- gov.uk/state-pension-age
- royalgreenwich.gov.uk/council-tax-support

Help with council tax

Council tax is a property-based tax in the UK. You won't be liable for council tax if you are living with family members or with a sponsor under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Financial help via Council Tax Support (CTS) is available for people on low incomes who pay council tax. There is also a system of discounts to help reduce council tax costs - you can get this help even if you don't qualify for CTS. Find out more here: royalgreenwich.gov.uk/reduce-your-council-tax-bill

Finding employment

Jobcentre staff are delivering face-to-face assistance to help people find suitable work - including advice on benefit eligibility. Visit find your nearest jobcentre here: find-your-nearest-jobcentre.dwp.gov.uk

It is also worth contacting Greenwich Local Labour and Business (GLLaB), the council's employment and skills service. They work with a range of organisations to give you the best chance of finding a job. Register with GLLaB here: royalgreenwich.gov.uk/xfp/form/484

Help with health costs

Children, people aged 60 or over, and some people with certain medical conditions can get free prescriptions and eyesight tests. You will also get free prescriptions, help with NHS dental treatment, vouchers towards the cost of glasses and refunds of fares to hospital if you receive certain income-based benefits. You may still get help towards health costs if you are on a low income even if you're not on benefits. Visit the NHS website for more information: nhs.uk/nhs-services/help-with-health-costs/when-you-need-to-pay-towards-nhs-care

Additional support

If your placement breaks down

If the placement breaks down and you need a new place to live, please contact the council's Housing Inclusion Service who will work with you to find alternative accommodation. Call **020 8921 2863** or use the online contact form: royalgreenwich.gov.uk/xfp/form/688

Financial support in an emergency or crisis

The Council's Emergency Support Scheme is a discretionary scheme to assist residents in crisis. Support includes Emergency Support Payments for residents who don't have enough money to buy essentials in an emergency or crisis. You don't have to be receiving benefits to qualify. There are also Community Support awards for residents on low-income benefits who need help with basic household items and furniture.

For more information and how to apply, visit the Royal Greenwich website (royalgreenwich.gov.uk/ess). Please call **020 8921 2078** (available Monday to Thursday 10am to 5pm; Friday 10am to 4.30pm) if you need help with the online form. If your emergency support payment application is successful, you will be issued with a cash payment which you can redeem at the Post Office.

Greenwich Supports

Help is available for residents who are struggling with rising living costs. Sources of financial support include Cost of Living Payments for pensioners and people receiving certain disability or low-income benefits. Check out our Greenwich Supports webpages (royalgreenwich.gov.uk/greenwich-supports) to find out if you could get extra help. If you are in crisis and need support, please call Live Well Greenwich on 0800 470 4831.

Live Well Greenwich

LiveWell Greenwich supports residents to live healthier, happier lives for longer. It works together with local services, and communities to promote good physical and mental health and wellbeing.



LiveWell Greenwich can provide signposting and support to get help with things like eating well, becoming more active, stopping smoking, drinking less, money/debt/benefits advice, employment and /training, support with housing needs, NHS health checks and support managing your long-term health condition.

Call the Live Well Greenwich Line on **0800 470 4831** (available Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 7.30pm, Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm, Saturday 9am to 12 noon) to access this support or visit the website for further information: **livewellgreenwich.org.uk**.

The British Red Cross

The British Red Cross supports people from Ukraine who are in the UK. The information on their website (**redcross.org.uk/get-help/get-help-as-a-refugee**) will help you and your family find out about services and support that might be available. For any more information about British Red Cross, or for emotional support please call the free British Red Cross support line on **0808 196 3651** (open between 10am - 5pm Monday to Friday, 10am to 8pm Wednesday). Interpreters are available.

If you need benefits advice and information or help managing your claim

For benefits advice and/or to check if you're missing out on any entitlements, contact the Welfare Rights Service Public Advice Line on **020 8921 6375** or textphone **18001 020 8921 6375** (Mon, Wed, Thurs: 10am - 1pm).

If you need help with claims (including managing your Universal Credit claim), call the Universal Support Team on **020 8921 3333** (Mon to Fri, 10am-4pm) or email universal-support@royalgreenwich.gov.uk.

You can also contact both teams via the Royal Greenwich website using an online contact form: **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/xfp/form/530**

Drop-in face-to-face advice is available at outreach locations around the borough (excluding public holidays) – find out more about our advice hubs here: **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/advicehubs**

Further benefits information is available on the Royal Greenwich website. You can download benefit factsheets (**royalgreenwich.gov.uk/benefits-advice**) or use our online benefit calculator (**royalgreenwich.gov.uk/benefitcalculator**) to work out which benefits you may be able to claim.

GOV.UK

GOV.UK is the UK government's website and is the best place to find information about government services. Visit the website for more information including:

- to view Homes for Ukraine guidance for guests: **gov.uk/government/collections/homes-for-ukraine-guidance-for-guests**
- for translated information - Homes for Ukraine guidance for guests is available in a limited range of languages (see above link and select the language link at the top right of the page).

Useful links

UK Visa and Immigration Ukraine Helpline

Telephone: **0808164 8810** or **+44 (0)175 390 7510** if you cannot contact UK 0808 numbers.
Lines are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5.30pm.

Universal Credit Help to claim

Freephone service delivered by Citizens Advice.

Telephone: **0800 144 8 444**

Advisers are available 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday.

Ask for a translator if you need to get advice in a different language.

Local Jobcentres

Woolwich Jobcentre

Nelson House, 50 Wellington Street,
Woolwich,
London SE18 6PY

0800 169 0190

Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm (except
Wednesday 10am to 5pm)

Bexleyheath Jobcentre

Westminster House, 186-194 Broadway,
Bexleyheath,
Kent DA6 7BB

0800 169 0190

Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm (except
Wednesday 10am to 5pm)

Citizens Advice Greenwich

Independent organisation providing free, confidential advice and information on a range of issues including debt, benefits, housing, and employment.

Freephone **080 8278 7695**

(Monday & Tuesday 10am-1pm; Wednesday & Thursday Tuesday 2-4.30pm; Friday 10am-12pm)

greenwichcab.org.uk

Royal Greenwich services

Emergency Support Scheme (ESS)

For emergency support payments or community support payments. Apply online

Telephone: **020 8921 2078** (available Mon to Thurs 10am-5pm, Fri 10am-4.30pm)

Email: emergency-support@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

royalgreenwich.gov.uk/ess

Pupil Benefits

Free School meals, school clothing and travel grants.

Apply online

Telephone: **020 8921 2530**

Email: pandsbenefits@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

royalgreenwich.gov.uk/xfp/form/613

Families Information Service

Find out about free early learning for two- to four-year-olds.

Telephone: **020 8921 7921**

Email: fis@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

royalgreenwich.gov.uk/fis

Adult Social Care

You may be able to access a range of services and support, from short-term help and rehabilitation, to ongoing support and risk prevention.

Telephone: **020 8921 2304** (available Mon to Thurs, 9am-5pm, Fri 9am-4pm)

Email: aops.contact.officers@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

royalgreenwich.gov.uk/adult-social-care-team

Housing Inclusion Service

For housing advice and support.

020 8921 2863

Contact the team online here:

royalgreenwich.gov.uk/xfp/form/688

If you need immigration advice

Visit the GOV.UK website for details of how to find an immigration adviser: gov.uk/find-an-immigration-adviser