

Welcome

Making Kingston your home: guidebook





Dear Ukrainian Friend,

I write to welcome you on behalf of the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames.

Our beautiful borough has a very diverse community. We welcome and celebrate people from all over

the world.

As a borough, we will do all that we can to provide you with support while you settle here.

This guidebook has been put together to help you access information and support as you arrive. A supporting document with extra information can also be found on our website.

We know there is a lot of information here. You can see it as a guidebook for helping you adapt to life in Kingston. Take a look at the contents page to find the sections most useful to you.

We are here to support you.

With warmest regards

Councillor Liz Green

Mayor of the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

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What to expect when you first arrive

Welcome to the Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames. Our Kingston United for Ukraine Team will be here to support you and help you settle into your new life here. Please ensure that the contact details (phone number and email) we hold for you are up to date. If you need to inform us of any changes, please let us know by emailing **ukraine@kingston.gov.uk**

When you arrive in Kingston, our 'Kingston Council Ukraine Team' will contact you and arrange an appointment for you with our Kingston Integration Welcome Team at the Kingston Council Offices at the Guildhall 2 building (Ground Floor, Guildhall 2, High St, Kingston upon Thames KT1 1EU). There will be signs to direct you. The Integration Welcome team will support you in accessing local services and provide other support as needed.

You can always request additional appointments with the Kingston Integration Welcome Team team. To do this, please email: **ukraine@kingston.gov.uk** for an appointment.

Initial Welcome Appointment

All guests under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme are appointed a Welcome Integration caseworker to support you in integration. The list of support that can be offered at the Integration Welcome appointments is listed below. If any of these areas cannot be covered in the first meeting, you are encouraged to book follow up appointments with your caseworker.

Support that will be offered:(if relevant):

1. Bank account advice
2. Applying for a National Insurance Number
3. Applying for Universal Credit ('benefits', see 'How will I get money')
4. Applying for child benefits
5. Immediate Financial Support
6. Registering with a local doctor (known as a General Practitioner' or 'GP' (see 'Getting Healthcare')
7. Biometric Residence Permit and eVisa advice
8. School admissions and vouchers for school uniform (upon school placement confirmation)
9. Nursery admissions
10. English Language classes for adults and children
11. Covid-19 (Coronavirus) Vaccines
12. Advice about local services and activities (Connected Kingston)
13. Support into employment and local volunteering opportunities
14. Children's Centre advice and information
15. Future housing arrangements

Guests will be able to arrange follow up appointments if needed with the caseworkers. The appointment will take place at the Information & Advice Centre, Guildhall 2, High Street, Kingston, KT1 1EU. For more information on some of these points, please refer to our supporting document "Guidance and Further Information". At your first meeting, we will help you get registered to receive 'benefits' known as Universal Credit. Benefits are monthly payments to support you with living costs, such as travel and food.

Immediate Financial Support

Financial Support Provided at Integration Appointment

During your first Integration Welcome Appointment we will provide you (and any other family members in your group) the following:

- **£200 initial subsistence payment:** The council will provide you £200 for each new arrival from Ukraine who has come to Kingston through the Homes for Ukraine programme. This payment provides financial support for you while the Department for Work and Pensions arranges access to Universal Credit (benefits). This will be given to you as a prepaid “All Pay” card.
- **School Uniform:** We will also provide a one off payment for the purchase of school uniforms for primary and secondary school students. This payment will be issued upon school placement confirmation and will be added to your “All Pay” card.
- **Oyster Card:** We will provide a £20 Oyster travel card to each new arrival (adult) at your appointment at Guildhall 2. The Oyster card can then be topped up by yourselves.

Please contact us on: ukraine@kingston.gov.uk if you have not been contacted by us to arrange an appointment.

All Pay Prepaid Card

This is a prepaid card similar to a bank card, which comes with a number code to use it (known as a ‘PIN code’). It can be used at thousands of retailers displaying the Mastercard acceptance mark, via contactless payments and to make online purchases. The amount of money you have available on your All Pay card (‘the balance’) can be viewed at an ATM (cash) machine. Please know that you **cannot** withdraw cash from ATM machines. A leaflet containing instructions for the All Pay card has been translated into Ukrainian and will also be given to you.

Welfare Visit

Once you have settled in, you or your host will **receive an email or a call from the Council to arrange a Welfare Visit to your home**. An interpreter will be offered if required as your Host cannot translate on your behalf. During this visit, officers will check that you are making progress with your integration checklist and if there are any areas where you need support. We will endeavour to be flexible in arranging a suitable time for this visit. However, if you are unable to work with us to find an appointment time within a month of you/ your guest(s) arriving, then we may have to withhold host payments until this visit has been conducted to our satisfaction.

Accommodation

Your sponsor has offered to provide you with accommodation for a minimum of 6 months.

Before you reach 6 months under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, you will receive an email from **ukraine@kingston.gov.uk** detailing a list of options to help you ensure that you have accommodation after the first 6 months in the UK. You will also receive a phone call to discuss what your next plans are. We would recommend that you give yourself plenty of time to plan for living arrangements beyond 6 months. We will continue to check in with you every 6 months to see what your plans are and whether you need any support.

Please see the link below for more information on living arrangement options once your hosting relationship has come to an end:

<https://www.kingston.gov.uk/ukraine-1/homes-ukraine-living-arrangements-first-6-months>

If you are still living with your sponsor after 12 months or 18 months, we will make a further phone call to discuss what your living arrangement plans are.

Rematching

In addition to the national matching scheme, local authorities including Kingston Council have been requested to facilitate 'rematching' of guests from Ukraine with new sponsors where needed. Some guests will need to be 'rematched' with a Kingston household for reasons such as failed checks on the original matched hosts, a matched sponsor pulling out of the scheme, or a failure of the original match.

While we do our best to facilitate rematching in Kingston, this is dependent on how many suitable hosts we have available at the time and therefore cannot be guaranteed. We encourage groups to use their own networks to try and find a new host if needed. All new hosts need to meet nationally required checks. If you do find a new host, please contact the Ukraine Arrivals and Queries Team at ukraine@kingston.gov.uk so they can initiate the appropriate council checks for the host.

Ukraine Rental Support Grant

If you have found a property to rent, Kingston Council can support you by providing a one-off grant of up to £5000 for your deposit and first month's rent.

In order to be eligible for the grant, your property will need to pass suitability and affordability checks. The grant is paid directly to your landlord and cannot be paid retrospectively.

For further information and to apply for the grant, please contact Kingston United for Ukraine at ukraine@kingston.gov.uk.

Unaccompanied Ukrainian children - when and who to contact:

Achieving for Children (AfC), which runs Kingston Council's children's services, is leading the support for children (under 17 years and 6 months) who have arrived in Kingston through the Homes for Ukraine scheme where children are arriving without their parents. Please contact AfC using the contact details below for the following situations:

- A child from Ukraine (who has come under the Homes for Ukraine scheme) who is in the UK with their parent/s but the parent/s are planning to leave the UK and leave the child with the sponsor (host) or someone else. Please contact our team and advise them of the possibility that the child will remain in the UK without their parent/s. Please contact: **ukraine@kingston.gov.uk**
- If you are aware of a child who has come to the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme and is not with their parent/s. Please contact the Kingston Council 'Single Point of Access' on 020 8547 5008
- If you are aware of a child who is still in Ukraine but will be travelling to the UK without his or parent/s, please refer to the guidance for parents and legal guardians:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-guidance-for-parents-or-legal-guardians-children-and-minors-applying-without-parents>.

You can also contact our team Kingston Single Point of Access on 020 8547 5008.

Contacting Kingston Council Ukraine team and other council services

How to contact Kingston Council Ukraine team

To contact the Ukraine Arrivals and Queries team, please email ukraine@kingston.gov.uk or visit our Integration Welcome caseworkers in the Welcome Area at the Guildhall, High St, Kingston upon Thames KT1 1EU.

You can also find out more about Kingston Council through the Kingston Council website: [Kingston Council](#) To speak to someone about any of the other services that the Royal Borough of Kingston provides please either email the teams via links on the Council website or you can call the main council number: 020 8547 5000.

Please see our Homes for Ukraine Guidance and Further Information Booklet for more information on other services and organisations within Kingston. [Our Kingston Council Ukraine webpages can be found here](#)

Who can I contact if I do not feel safe living with my Sponsor?

If you are having difficulties in your hosting arrangement please email ukraine@kingston.gov.uk or attend Guildhall 2 Welcome Area Monday - Friday 10am-4pm.

In an emergency, where you feel you or your group are in danger, please contact the emergency services by calling **999**.

Who can I contact if I have questions on housing and accommodation arrangements after your hosting?

If you are having questions in relation to your housing arrangements please email ukraine@kingston.gov.uk or attend our weekly Housing drop-in sessions for Ukrainian guests at Guildhall 2 (Monday 13:00-16:00 and Wednesday 10:00-13:00)

Queries

Please email ukraine@kingston.gov.uk. We aim to respond to all emails within 2 working days. Emails are monitored Mondays-Fridays (not on weekends or Bank Holidays). If you have not received a reply within 2 working days, please send a further email. You can also visit our Welcome Area at Guildhall 2 Monday - Friday 10am till 4pm and speak to one of our caseworkers.

For urgent queries **only** you call the contact centre on: **020 8547 5000 9am-5pm Monday-Friday** (or during out-of-hours **020 8547 5800**) and a message can be left for the Ukraine Arrivals & Queries Team.

For any queries for our Housing Options Service, please call **020 8547 5003 9am-5pm Monday-Friday**. If you have any urgent out of hours housing issues, such as homelessness, please call **020 8770 5000**.