

# Rapid early action assessment: Ukraine

**Last updated:** 2 March 2022

## About this assessment

This rapid assessment presents our best understanding, at the time of writing, of how the situation in Ukraine could affect the UK. This document is intended to aid awareness of the potential impacts for VCSEP partners. The conflict brings many uncertainties and the analyses presented below may change as circumstances change; we will update our assessments and scenarios accordingly.

## Scenarios and potential impacts

The scenarios below result from desk research and note that we have not included a scenario about refugees/resettlement at this time.

Scenarios are presented in decreasing order of likelihood, based on current knowledge and evidence. We have not yet attempted to categorise impact.

### Scenario 1 – Compounding the cost-of-living crisis and food shortages

Liz Truss warned that the UK will face “[some economic hardship](#)” as a result of sanctions on Russia. The price of petrol has reached [an all-time high](#) and prices for other fuels have also increased. Food supply might also be affected: in 2021, Ukrainians formed [two-thirds of seasonal workers](#) in horticulture, poultry, and pork. Ukrainian workers already in the UK will have their visas extended to the end of 2022, but numbers are not clear, nor is the possibility of recruiting new/replacement workers.

#### Consequences:

- People in the lowest-income households, including renters multiple-occupancy households, are likely to face the biggest cost-of-living squeezes
- Food insecurity is disproportionately affecting people on low incomes with children, from marginalised ethnic backgrounds, and living with disabilities – as are households in London and the North East of England

### Scenario 2 – Cyberattacks on UK infrastructure

Potential for [cyberattacks](#) on UK infrastructure, including [hospitals](#), the power grid, water networks, banks, and transport such as train lines.

#### Consequences:

- Risk to life – especially for people receiving urgent/emergency care in hospitals, if water networks are hit, or if trains get derailed
- Food supply constrained
- Limited access to money / increased destitution in unexpected parts of the population in short-term and financial crisis in long-term
- Service delivery affected for charities
- Mis/dis-information could infiltrate/flood social media channels sparking irrational/illogical responses

Internal Use (by all Partners)

### **Scenario 3 – Hate crimes and other unrest**

At the time of writing, no anti-Russian hate crimes have been reported, although this remains a possibility.

#### **Consequences:**

- Risk of violence
- Civil unrest

### **Scenario 4: Nuclear winds**

A currently low-likelihood worst-case scenario could stem from Russia's capture of the Chernobyl nuclear plant, missiles targeting nuclear waste sites, and the threat to deploy nuclear weapons. After the 1986 meltdown at Chernobyl, radiation borne by wind [reached the UK](#), causing a spike in radiation-related diseases and deaths for years after, as well as leading the Government to ban the sale of sheep that had ingested radioactive material.

#### **Consequences:**

- Radiation-related diseases and deaths
- Further pressures on health and care system
- Food supply constraints
- Shock to livelihoods for agriculture and horticulture
- Poor mental health
- Service delivery affected for charities

### **Feedback and further information**

We're interested to know how useful (or otherwise) you have found this rapid assessment. We are also keen to hear any information on emerging trends, risks, and vulnerabilities. Please contact [Matt Thomas](#).