



Ukraine: Scenarios for people seeking protection in the UK

Last updated: 15th March 2022. A master copy of this document is being updated and will be made available to partners if significant changes occur.

PRE-EXISTING NEEDS AND VULNERABILITIES ACROSS SCENARIOS

The Ukrainian population is one of the oldest in the world and has higher levels of social and health inequalities compared to the UK. This section summarises the pre-existing vulnerabilities and potential needs among the Ukrainian population; these are likely to be exacerbated by the conflict.

Health vulnerabilities

People arriving in the UK from Ukraine are likely to have significant health and care needs. Overall healthcare access and quality is lower than the UK, meaning health conditions could be undiagnosed. Before the conflict, there were already high levels of mortality in the country due to pollution, poor diet, smoking, alcoholism, and poor medical care. Compared to the UK, more people are living with disabilities and non-communicable diseases. Around 260k people in Ukraine were living with HIV/AIDS.

Covid-19 vaccination uptake is relatively low in Ukraine: only 36% of people (15.7m) have received at least one dose. Hesitancy is mainly due to lack of knowledge around disease risks, reluctance to have further shots, mis/disinformation, and lack of trust in the health system. Immunisation rates for measles, hepatitis B, and DTP among children is relatively high.

Key pre-existing needs:

- Medication, including Covid-19 vaccinations
- Psychosocial support
- Medical treatment, particularly for potentially undiagnosed conditions (and any injuries sustained since fleeing their home)

Social and economic vulnerabilities

Social networks are a key protector against vulnerability, enabling people to meet various needs - but will have been disrupted by the crisis, particularly as people seek protection in other countries. Nearly four out of five people are ethnic Ukrainians, with a further 17% being Russian, as well as people from other ethnic backgrounds¹. The majority religion is Orthodox Christian. 3,000 - 5,000 people were granted refugee status in Ukraine, mostly from Afghanistan. Being part of minoritized ethnic and religious groups in a new country can lead to stigma and exclusion, particularly if they are not connected into diaspora communities.

Digital exclusion may be a risk. Broadband access is relatively low in Ukraine and, although there appears to be good coverage of mobile phone subscriptions across the population, it is unclear how many are smartphone users – so there may be needs in terms of digital skills.

¹ Other ethnicities in Ukraine include (in descending order of population size): Belarusian, Moldovan, Crimean Tatar, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Romanian, Polish, Jewish, Pontic Greeks, Muslim Bulgarians, some Swedes, ethnic Koreans, and Romani.



Key pre-existing needs:

- Restoration of existing social networks or building new social networks
- Access to money
- Digital skills training, as well as access to devices and data

SCENARIOS FOR POTENTIAL NEEDS OF ARRIVALS TO UK

It is difficult to predict how many people fleeing Ukraine will seek protection in the UK. This will depend on several important but unpredictable factors such as the scale, duration, and humanitarian consequences of the conflict. This section focuses on scenarios analysing the potential needs of arrivals to UK split by **6 potential entry modes** and **3 key factors**:

- WHO?: Which **cohorts** of people are more likely to arrive by this route (in the short-term and longer-term)?
- NEEDS?: What **needs** might these cohorts have?
- WHEN?: What could we say about potential **scale** or frequency/waves of arrivals?

Numbers of people arriving through each of the six potential routes will be affected—in difficult-to-predict ways—by how the conflict protracts or escalates (including any potential spillover into Europe) and the presence and accessibility of humanitarian corridors. Note that we have not accounted for any potential displacement from the Russian Federation.

The six routes of arrival below are presented in descending order of likelihood, based on current knowledge.

1. People arriving via Family Migration Visa / Ukraine Family Scheme / EU Settlement Scheme Family Permit

WHO?

- Extended family members of British nationals, people settled in the UK, people with refugee status, humanitarian protection, or limited leave² can apply for a family migration visa from 4th March 2022.
- This will include parents, grandparents, adult children, and siblings from Ukraine, as well as immediate family members³.
- Extended family members can bring immediate family via the Ukraine Family Scheme e.g., a sibling of a settled person will be able to come to the UK with their spouse and child.
- Short term: likely to be a larger influx of women, children, and elderly men⁴.
- Exclusions to these two visa routes: Ukrainian nationals in Ukraine (who aren't immediate family members of British nationals normally living in Ukraine, or where the British national is living in the UK), are currently unable to make visa applications to visit, work, study or join family in the

² See page 9 of the [Home Office's Ukraine Scheme](#).

³ Immediate family members include: a spouse/civil partner; an unmarried partner – you must have been living together in a relationship for at least 2 years; your parent if you are under the age of 18; your child under the age of 18; an adult relative you provide care for who lives with you due to a medical condition; fiancé or proposed civil partner (where the relationship began prior to 2022)

⁴ Adult men aged 18-60 have been banned from leaving Ukraine and encouraged to join the army (starting on 24th Feb 2022 and in place until martial law ends).



UK through a visa application centre in Ukraine. If these people can safely travel, they can apply for other visas through a visa application centre in a nearby country.

- Ukrainians who are the family member of someone who is living in the UK with settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme who is from the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland may also be eligible to apply for the EU Settlement Scheme Family Permit.

NEEDS?

- Potential needs may be more limited/lower level than those coming from other routes, since they already have family here. However, immediate cash support may be required, especially for larger families, as there is no minimum income requirement. Also not clear if changes need to be made to Universal Credit, homelessness assistance and child benefit regulations to provide immediate eligibility.
- Family reunion travel assistance may be required (unclear if they may require financial assistance to travel and how the travel to UK is being coordinated or if this is a personal arrangement to be made?)
- VCSEP/BRC Refugee Support services may be able to supply standardised education product linked to rights and entitlements of those arriving under this scheme and signposting of services that could assist.

WHEN?

- Applications to this scheme are open on 4th March 2022. No clarity yet on length of application process or means of travel.
- Lack of clarity about when the arrivals may begin – unlikely to be seeing arrivals until mid-March.
- Anticipate rolling waves of arrivals.
- Unclear how long the Ukraine Family Scheme is intended to remain open.
- Unclear if there is a 'cap' on the number of applications that the UK government will accept for the Ukraine Family Scheme.
- People arriving via Ukraine Family Scheme visas will be given three years' leave to remain, as well as access to benefits and the right to work.
- Online applications open from 15th March for the Ukraine Family Scheme for Ukrainian passport holders in possession of their passport. (Vulnerable/complex cases still to be processed in person at visa application centres and non-Ukrainian citizens cannot apply online). Likely to see an increase in Ukrainian arrivals into UK from 16th March onwards.

2. People arriving via Local Sponsorship Scheme for Ukraine / Homes for Ukraine scheme

WHO?

- Ukrainians without any family ties to the UK. Potentially a substantial group, since the Ukrainian diaspora in the UK is only ~35,000 people – although they may go where diasporas are larger⁵.
- From conversations with the Home Office, eligibility may be wider than outlined above. It will be for anyone who doesn't qualify under another route. E.g., Ukrainian with family in the UK on a work/study visa so doesn't qualify for family route. Non-Ukrainian displaced as a result of the conflict who cannot return to their home country, such as someone who had refugee status in Ukraine.

⁵ Other countries have significantly larger Ukrainian diasporas, including Russia, Poland, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, Israel, Canada, and the Czech Republic.



- Ukrainian nationals and immediate family members who had been resident before 1st January 2022.
- Any age.
- Individuals or families eligible.

NEEDS?

- Potential needs of those arriving may be more limited/lower level than those coming from other routes since known sponsors are required, although psychosocial support and support accessing services may be required.
- Short-term needs: potential for wider Movement to support displaced Ukrainians to apply for the scheme. (UK Government is committed to working closely with international partners and neighbouring countries to promote the scheme)
- VCSEP/BRC networking / partnership potential with local authorities: identify/support those who want to sponsor an individual/family to volunteer and be matched with Ukrainians in need.
- Longer-term needs: BRC expertise to support with potential additional asylum support claims if the scheme does not extend beyond 12 months leave granted and the situation in Ukraine remains unchanged.
- There may be other resettlement programmes announced that these people could apply for. Support with rights and entitlements likely to be a key need.
- Hosts will earn £350/month. Refugees who are single and receiving Universal Credit will learn less than this (£257.33/month if aged under 25; £324.84/month if aged 25+).
- Possibility of spikes in homelessness, destitution among refugees under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, beyond the minimum sponsored housing stay of six months.

WHEN?

- The scheme launched on 14 March, with 43,800 people signing up as potential hosts in the first five hours.
- No limit on this scheme: the UK will welcome as many Ukrainians as wish to come and have matched sponsors.
- Unclear when this scheme will operate until or close.
- Arrivals will be granted leave for an initial period of three years and able to work and access public services and benefits.
- Based on initial responses to a [Guardian/Opinium poll](#), we might expect at least 2.6m households offering to host Ukrainian refugees.

3. People arriving on work and study visas (e.g. seasonal workers, skilled worker, healthcare worker, graduate)**WHO?**

- May include Ukrainians with no links to UK who aren't eligible for the family reunion style visas (see last bullet point in Section 1. under 'who') but are eligible to apply for visas on other terms.
- Ukrainians who already had approval to travel on a work or study visa. Nearly 22,000 applications for entry clearance visas were approved during Q3-4 2021.
- Men/women aged 18 and above.

NEEDS?



- Short-term needs: accommodation, access to public services, and potentially initial cash assistance, depending on whether they arrive with cash/access to their own cash or not. Eligibility under this route of arrival often requires a confirmed job offer/transfer within a UK company branch, so likely to be support structures in place for arrivals.
- Highest area of need is potentially those coming via a Graduate visa, with people staying on to look for work. Destitution support may be needed until employment and sustainable financial support is in place.
- Long-term needs are likely to be linked to legal aid and access to rights and entitlements should their work visa expire.

WHEN?

- Difficult to know what the scale/frequency may be.
- Number of current applications for work visas could be monitored to see if the trends rise dramatically. Potential increase in applications for this mode of arrival for Ukrainians seeking a safe, legal passage to the UK who don't qualify for routes (1) or (2) outlined above – and if route (6) did not become a reality.

4. People arriving via “irregular”⁶ routes**WHO?**

- Anyone fleeing Ukraine.
- Increased likelihood of large or low-income families or undocumented migrants who cannot afford or access international flights or other safer routes to arrive.
- Vulnerable migrants could also be trafficked in via ‘irregular routes’.

NEEDS?

- Destitution support. Short term: Clothing, shelter, cash assistance, food.
- Legal aid – support to secure their status a priority.
- Protection from exploitation on arrival.

WHEN?

- Ongoing.
- Channel crossings anticipated throughout the year with seasonal increases in arrivals linked to weather conditions.
- Some arrivals via international ports anticipated in lorries. Anticipated there will be lower numbers of arrivals via ports due to customs checks.

5. People trafficked into the UK⁷**WHO?**

- Unaccompanied minors
- Vulnerable women and children

NEEDS?

- Protection/relocation within UK potentially.

⁶ Home Office would class this as arriving by an ‘illegal’ route. However, it is not illegal to enter the UK by any route in order to claim asylum.

⁷ Before the conflict, approx. [18,500 people were trafficked from Ukraine](#) to Russia and Poland, 54% of them women.



- Destitution support.
- Healthcare – medical and psychosocial support.
- Access to justice – legal aid, rights and entitlements.
- *Further needs to be identified by the Anti-Trafficking Team.*

WHEN?

- Potentially ongoing as unscrupulous traffickers seek to capitalise on the vulnerabilities of refugees.
- Difficult to scope the likely scale or frequency of this.
- If the routes identified in (1) and (2) above closed or exceeded capacity and route (6) did not become operationalised then people may turn to more desperate options to flee as far as possible from Ukraine so potentially may see a rise in this in the longer-term.

6. People arriving via potential resettlement schemes (not currently in place)**WHO?**

- Potentially any Ukrainian and any other person who was resident in Ukraine at the time of the invasion? - e.g. people living in Ukraine on student visas, refugees from other crises such as Afghanistan.
- Potential for this to be an evacuation from Ukraine/neighbouring countries

NEEDS?

- Short-term needs: clothing, shelter, food, immediate medical needs, cash assistance.
- Longer-term needs: Accommodation, legal aid, public services (health, education etc), employment, family reunion.

WHEN?

- Unknown.
- Possibility this could start with large-scale initial arrivals – similar to Afghanistan evacuation – with greater scale of immediate needs and concomitant pressures on support organisations.
- Equally possible to be part of an ongoing offer (potentially across European countries not just UK), although likely to be higher initial uptake, so an early spike in support required.
- Potential for ‘emergency lanes’ / ‘humanitarian corridors’ paving the way for an increased likelihood of evacuation and/or announcement of resettlement scheme.

SCENARIOS FOR POTENTIAL NEEDS OF UKRAINIANS ALREADY IN THE UK**WHO?**

- Refugees: In total, 70 people from Ukraine have been granted protection or discretionary leave since 2017.
- People already in the asylum system: As of Q4 2021, 266 people from Ukraine were awaiting asylum decisions and 22 were refused asylum.
- Visa-holders and visa-overstayers: 483 visa extensions were granted, with four refused.
- People settled in the UK: In 2020, 435 people were granted settlement for family reasons, 219 for work reasons, and 19 for other reasons.
- 19,920 seasonal worker visas were granted to Ukrainians in 2021 (67% of the total)⁸. Unknown how many of these remain in the UK currently.
- Undocumented migrants from Ukraine: no estimates exist for population size.

NEEDS?

- Legal Aid: support to apply for visa changes.
- Access to Justice: understanding of rights and entitlements and how they are changing.
- Potential for increased destitution: leave to remain may be granted but access to accommodation/income might reduce.
- Access to physical and mental health support.
- Potential connection into Ukrainian diaspora groups, if not already connected.
- Family reunion / find missing loved ones / connecting with loved ones in/fleeing Ukraine.

WHEN?

- The Home Office agreed temporary concessions to support Ukrainian nationals currently in the UK who are now unable to return when their existing visa expires. These concessions will assist Ukrainian nationals in remaining in the UK without having to leave and re-apply from overseas. There is specific guidance to the following groups: Visitors, Skilled workers, Students, Seasonal workers (with added specifics for HGV drivers/pork butchers) with potential to switch visas (even if they normally would not be eligible to do so) and extensions in place for seasonal workers until 31st December 2022.
- These people are already here (prior to additional Ukrainians arriving) and so this is not so much about frequency/wave of arrivals now but might have an impact in the medium-to-long-term depending on when their renewed status expires – 31st December 2022 onwards.

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-december-2021/why-do-people-come-to-the-uk-to-work>

**CONSOLIDATED LIST OF POTENTIAL AREAS OF NEED OF THOSE ENTERING UK**

- Accommodation
- Financial support – cash assistance
- Food / other basic commodities especially immediately post arrival
- Clothing
- Healthcare (medical but also including psychosocial support)
- Employment / Volunteering opportunities
- Education (e.g. children to school)
- Community integration / cultural awareness sessions / information on local/national support groups
- Wellbeing activities / support
- Family reunion
- Social connectedness – links to existing Ukrainian populations in UK
- Digital – devices/data
- Unaccompanied minors – (social services support)
- Onward transportation within country
- Protection – help avoid vulnerabilities being exploited (e.g. trafficking)
- Reception Centers in known areas of arrival – e.g. airports, Eurotunnel.
- Legal Aid – Asylum Support/documentation that may be required to validate their status. Rights and Entitlements awareness raising.
- Support with documentation – many may have fled undocumented – e.g. lack of ID – no passport, no birth certificate, no proof of age etc. What about newly born children – unregistered completely potentially.

POTENTIAL AREAS OF NEED OF THOSE ALREADY IN UK

- Family Reunion – may have lost contact with family/friends who have joined the migration trail or who remain in Ukraine.
- Re-traumatisation of past experiences
- Ukrainians already seeking asylum in UK – what does this mean for them – particularly those with irregular status such as overstayers – legal aid support
- Financial assistance - they may have increased destitution if they have found a way to send support to their families trying to escape conflict

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Importance of partnership referral schemes – identify who is expert at what, don't all work in a crowded space – meet needs as holistically as possible cross-sector.
- New support – Ukrainian appeal funds

FEEDBACK AND FURTHER INFORMATION

We're interested to know how useful (or otherwise) you have found this rapid analysis of scenarios. We are also keen to hear any information on emerging trends, risks, and vulnerabilities. Please



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Internal Use (by all Partners)

contact [Matt Thomas](#) (Head of Strategic Insight and Foresight at British Red Cross) or [Clare Darlow](#) (Strategic Insight Lead at British Red Cross).