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# [*Immigration minister refuses to give evidence to MPs on Britain's response to Ukraine refugee crisis*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XD-3BF1-DY4H-K4B4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 4, 2022 Friday 12:29 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:7

**Length:** 763 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Kevin Foster being urged to reconsider refusal to answer questions given 'urgency of the situation'

**Body**

Britain's [*immigration*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/immigration) minister has refused to give evidence to MPs on the UK's response to the [***Ukraine***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) [***refugee***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugee) ***crisis***.

[*Kevin Foster*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kevin-foster) , the minister for immigration and future borders, has declined an invitation from the Home Affairs Committee to answer questions on what Britain is doing to provide support and refuge to people leaving Ukraine following the invasion by Russia.

The committee said that "given the urgency of the situation" it had asked the minister to reconsider.

A Home Office spokesperson later told The Independent Mr Foster "has not refused to attend but asked for a later date given this urgent work" responding to the Ukraine situation.

The department has come under criticism in recent days over its "bespoke humanitarian route" for Ukrainians fleeing the conflict, after it emerged that the scheme excludes swathes of refugees with loved ones in the UK.

Home secretary Priti Patel [*announced*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-visas-home-office-priti-patel-uk-b2026074.html) on Tuesday that it was expanding the route to include parents, grandparents, adult children and siblings of British nationals and people settled in the UK, and that a new sponsorship scheme was being established to help people fleeing the Russia invasion.

But many relatives, including partners or cousins of British nationals, as well as close relatives of people in the UK on work or study visas, who are not deemed to be "settled", [*remain excluded*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-visas-family-home-office-uk-b2025715.html) from the scheme.

Shadow immigration minister Yvette Cooper said [*earlier this week*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-visas-home-office-priti-patel-uk-b2026074.html) that there remained "significant questions" about "gaps in the system and delays", and that she remained concerned about whether this would deliver the "much needed support and sanctuary in practice".

It also [*emerged on Wednesday*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-helpline-home-office-refugees-visas-uk-b2026695.html) that the helpline set up by the Home Office for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** wishing to join loved ones in Britain under the new visa scheme was being manned by advisers who know nothing about the scheme.

It comes after Mr Foster was [*criticised*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-russia-crisis-kyiv-tory-mp-b2024163.html) for suggesting that ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the Russian invasion could apply for the seasonal worker scheme in order to get into the UK.

Replying to a tweet by Labour's shadow armed forces minister [*Luke Pollard*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/luke-pollard) raising concerns that Ukrainians fleeing the conflict still have to apply for a visa to enter the UK last week, the immigration minister, in a now-deleted tweet, cited the seasonal worker scheme. The suggestion prompted calls for him to apologies - which he has not done.

More than 1 million Ukrainians have already crossed the border, and the EU has said that 7 million people are likely to be displaced as a result of the conflict.

Labour has today called on the government to end "ongoing confusion" over its policy on refugees fleeing President Putin's war by making a "simple emergency visa" available to all Ukrainians that need sanctuary and protection in the UK.

Despite the commitments made by the prime minister to join other countries in providing protection for those who have fled the Russian bombardment in Ukraine, the opposition party warned that the "rhetoric does not match the reality".

Ms Cooper said: "People need a simple and safe route to sanctuary right now. Most want to stay close to home, especially those who have had to leave relatives behind, but the UK must play its part to help people seeking support and safety in our country too.

"Despite government announcements, desperate families are finding that the rhetoric doesn't match the reality. They cannot wait for the Home Secretary's slow and piecemeal approach which just doesn't match the urgency of this crisis. Ukrainians need help right now to reach safety."

A Home Office spokesperson said: "Home Office ministers are busy responding to the situation in Ukraine at this critical time, including helping reunite thousands of families in the UK through the Ukraine family scheme. Minister Foster has not refused to attend but asked for a later date given this urgent work."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Government under fire over support for Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y2-VHY1-JBNF-W26X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 5:03 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:3

**Length:** 737 words

**Byline:** Flora Thompson

**Highlight:** The Home Office has been accused of a chaotic response to the crisis.

**Body**

The [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) has been accused of having a chaotic response to the ***Ukraine*** ***refugee crisis***.

The government department came under fire from opposition politicians and charities amid confusion over whether more measures will be introduced to help people fleeing the war-torn country seek sanctuary in the UK.

It came after [*Downing Street*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/downing-street) dismissed suggestions that Home Secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) is examining "legal options" to create a "humanitarian route" - which would offer all ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** the right to come to the UK regardless of whether they have family ties here - with a spokesman saying this was in fact referring to [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) schemes which have already been announced.

Meanwhile Ms Patel told MPs more than 14,000 people have applied to come to the UK via the Ukraine family scheme visa.

Speaking at King's College London, Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer said: "The Home Office is in a complete mess about this - they keep changing the rules, the stories of what is actually happening on the ground contradict what the Home Office say.

"They have got to sort this out ... there should be a simple route to sanctuary for those that are fleeing for their lives."

Labour has called for an emergency visa which would be available to all Ukrainians who need protection in the UK.

Liberal Democrat home affairs spokesman Alistair Carmichael said: "We need a full, simple and fast refugee scheme now, not more costly delays and bureaucracy."

Steve Valdez-Symonds, from Amnesty International UK, said "history is repeating itself" in light of the "botched" response to last year's crisis in Afghanistan, adding that the Home Office was "once again too slow and too bureaucratic in response to a refugee crisis that almost everyone saw coming".

But Prime Minister [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) said the Government will not introduce a system whereby ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** can come to the UK "without any checks or any controls at all".

Ms Patel was quoted in the Sun as saying: "In response to the desperation I saw with my own eyes at the Polish border two days ago, I'm urgently escalating our response to the growing humanitarian crisis.

"I am now investigating the legal options to create a humanitarian route.

"This means anyone without ties to the UK fleeing the conflict in Ukraine will have a right to come to this nation."

But later on Monday a Downing Street spokesman told reporters this was the "sponsorship route that we set out last week," adding: "We will set out more details this week around the sponsorship scheme, which, as I say, will provide a route for Ukrainians without any family ties to the UK - and there is no limit to that scheme. That will welcome as many Ukrainians as wish to come and that have matched sponsors."

The Home Office could not confirm if it was drawing up additional measures for Ukrainians to come to the UK. But a spokeswoman insisted extensive support was already in place and said: "This is a rapidly moving and complex picture and, as the situation develops, we will continue to keep our support under constant review."

The Ukraine Family Scheme: Free to apply. Allows you to join family or extend your stay in the UK. You'll be able to live, work & study in the UK & access public funds.Apply: [*https://t.co/DFs1jNjVgE*](https://t.co/DFs1jNjVgE) Assistance: Call the free 24/7 helpline +44 808 164 8810 [*pic.twitter.com/PnpLe4xS8s*](https://t.co/PnpLe4xS8s) - Home Office (@ukhomeoffice) [*March 7, 2022*](https://twitter.com/ukhomeoffice/status/1500811424368582670?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

According to reports, some Ukrainians have been turned away at the UK border when arriving in Calais, France.

Pictures also emerged on Twitter of signs, apparently in northern France, saying UK visas will not be provided there and advising people to apply online or travel to Paris or Brussels to make an application.

But Ms Patel insisted there are British officials in Calais, telling the Commons: "It is absolutely right that we've already had people in Calais," adding: "It is wrong to say we're just turning people back - we're absolutely not, we're supporting those that have been coming to Calais."

The Government is under pressure to do more to help refugees after it emerged on Sunday that only "around 50" visas had been issued under the Ukraine Family Scheme so far.

Ms Patel told MPs the figures in the public domain are "absolutely inaccurate" and that official figures will be published on Monday, adding: "Over 14,000 people have applied ... it's wrong to say that this Government is not welcoming ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***."

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

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[*Britain's response to Ukraine refugee crisis a 'source of shame', says TUC*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6510-RN01-DY4H-K07D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 902 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Exclusive: Letter to Boris Johnson from TUC general secretary accuses ministers of 'falling short of humanity, common decency and urgent action that ordinary working people in Britain expect'

**Body**

[*Britain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britain) 's response to the [***Ukraine***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ***refugee crisis*** has been branded a "source of shame" by the Trade Unions Congress (TUC), with the union group accusing ministers of taking a "slow" and "mean-spirited" approach.

In a letter to [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) , TUC general secretary France O'Grady said the government had "fallen short of the humanity, common decency and urgent action that ordinary working people in Britain expect" in responding to the millions of Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion in recent weeks.

She called on the prime minister to replicate the actions of countries across Europe and open up visa free travel to all those fleeing conflict and war, both from Ukraine and "around the world", adding that "sufficient funding" must be provided to support [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) when they arrive in the UK.

Extending her concerns to the government's wider approach to immigration and asylum, Ms O'Grady said ministers should scrap the Nationality and Borders Bill -a piece of legislation currently going through Parliament -warning that it would give UK refugees an "even colder welcome".

Britain's offer to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** has been widely criticised after it refused to introduce visa-free travel to those fleeing, instead introducing a family scheme a week after the start of the war allowing Ukrainians with relatives who are settled in the country to join them.

Refugees have struggled to navigate the scheme's application process, which has required many to travel to visa centres, sometimes located [*many miles away*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukrainian-refugees-visa-warsaw-rzeszow-uk-b2032259.html) , and forced some to [*wait for hours in the cold*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugees-poland-uk-visa-home-office-b2031118.html). The Home Office subsequently eased the requirements and since Tuesday refugees with passports have been able to apply online.

On Monday, more than a fortnight after Russia invaded, the UK government announced [*a separate scheme*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-refugees-sponsorship-scheme-michael-gove-uk-b2035658.html) which will allow Ukrainians with no family links to come to the UK and live in homes offered by members of the public, with access to work and public funds.

The Independent is raising money for the people of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) - if you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

In her letter to the prime minister, Ms O'Grady raised concerns about this scheme, warning that it does not grant refugees access to housing benefit - which she said creates a "real risk" of people ending up homeless in cases where a placement breaks down and they need to pay for their own accommodation.

She adds: "We urge you now to replicate the actions of countries across Europe and open up visa free travel to all those fleeing conflict and war, from Ukraine and around the world, and to ensure that sufficient funding is provided to support refugees when they arrive in the UK."

While Ms O'Grady said she supported the decision to allow ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to access employment, she said a "real welcome" would require people to be "properly supported to find decent work.

"Migrant workers are more likely to be exploited. The language barrier they face, and their precarious immigration status means they are less likely to know their rights and may be afraid to complain if they are being mistreated," the letter states.

Condemning the borders bill, which has returned to the House of Commons this week after being debated by the Lords, the general secretary said: "We must ensure that those fleeing future wars do not face an even colder welcome, by stopping the Nationality and Borders Bill.

"If the bill is passed many Ukrainians, along with others around the world fleeing conflict, threats to their lives and seeking safety may find themselves treated as criminals and deported, instead of being offered sanctuary."

The legislation, being pushed through by home secretary Priti Patel, would see refugees penalised and possibly criminalised for their method of arrival to the UK, and could see asylum seekers sent to offshore hubs for processing and subjected to "pushbacks" if they try to reach Britain in small boats.

Ms O'Grady called for a "universal, non-discriminatory" asylum system that "treats all refugees, regardless of where they come from, equally" - adding that the Homes for Ukraine scheme can be "no substitute" for a properly funded system that provides universal refugee protection.

It comes as the United Nations announced that more than three million people have now fled Ukraine since the Russian onslaught began three weeks ago -the largest exodus in Europe since the Second World War.

Many have fled to neighbouring Poland, Hungary, Moldova, Slovakia and Romania, while some 300,000 people are estimated to have moved onwards to western European countries, such as the UK.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Growing pressure to waive visas for Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YM-HVV1-JCS0-D29N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 10, 2022 Thursday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 5

**Length:** 934 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

The Ukrainian ambassador has urged the British government to temporarily lift all visa requirements for those fleeing his country, with pressure increasing on ministers to act over a system that has been heavily criticised.

Around 850 people have so far been issued a visa under the Home Office's family migration scheme, announced on Friday - despite tens of thousands with family links to the UK applying.

Vadym Prystaiko said that if bureaucratic procedures were "simplified" it would "definitely resolve all the issues". He told the Home Affairs Select Committee yesterday: "I don't expect many of them to come. I don't want to see these pictures of people banging at the doors in Calais and scratching the doors which are quite sealed."

Campaigners have accused the UK of "lagging behind" other European countries over its response to the ***Ukraine*** ***refugee crisis*** by welcoming a "pitiful" number of refugees in the first two weeks of the war. The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman called for "immediate action" to enable refugees to get their cases dealt with swiftly by removing "unnecessary delaysand bureaucracy"in the visa application process.

Ombudsman Rob Behrens said:"It is vital the Home Officeactsto correctfailingsinits handling of visa applications, especially failings we have previously reported and which we are seeing repeated here.

"In this horrendous situationswift action is needed to make sure the process of getting a visa is simple, accessible and quick. Lives depend on it."

Hundreds of Ukrainians have arrived in the French port town of Calais since the Russian invasion began in the hope of reaching their loved ones in Britain, but have not been allowed to apply to the scheme from there.

Confusion arose yesterday after the Home Office announced that a temporary visa centre in Lille - some 70 miles away - which was initially thought to be a facility where ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** could travel to submit their visa applications, would only work on a referral basis.

The department was also accused of telling "outright lies" after The Independent revealed that a Home Office official had wrongly claimed that Ukrainian refugeesin Calais could obtain freeEurostartickets to travel to a UK visa centre inLille- when in fact this route does not exist.

Meanwhile, thousands of refugees grappled with the "unbearable" UK visa application process in other European countries, which has seen many forced to wait for hours in the cold and travel for miles.

Refugees who attended a UK visa centre inPolandto submit applications to join relatives in the UK were told that they must travel 170 miles across the country in order to complete the process, prompting those going through the process to describe it as "unbearable".

Enver Solomon, chief executive of the Refugee Council, described the government's approach to helping Ukrainian people as "mean spirited" and accused Britain of "lagging behind our European neighbours" in its response.

"The government's family visa scheme is extremely limited and restricted, with visas granted to hundreds of people - a pitiful number, and a fraction of the need and application numbers," he said.

"The government needs to urgently waive visa requirements to enable Ukrainians to travel to the UK more easily and then grant them refugee protection as quickly as possible after arrival."

Sonya Sceats, chief executive at Freedom from Torture, echoed his remarks, saying: "This government's pitiful response to the plight of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** shames Britain.

"Not only are these failing visa-based schemes causing intolerable heartbreak for Ukrainians blocked from reaching safety here by all the red tape. It is time for the prime minister to listen to the British people and abandon his insistence on visas for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***."

The government's approach to the crisis came under further criticism after it emerged that home secretary Priti Patel told the Irish government she was concerned that the country's welcoming policy towards Ukrainian refugeeswould allow them to reach the UK by the back door.

Ananonymous briefing from a UK government sourceon Tuesday suggested that Ukrainian criminals or drug dealers could take advantage of the Anglo-Irish common travel area to gain access to mainland Britain - a suggestion was labelled as "disgraceful" and "absolutely terrible" by members of the Irish parliament.

It comes after the government faced a barrage of criticism from Tory MPs over its response, with ministers accused by its own backbenchers of showing "too little compassion" and urged to "get a grip".

David Cameron suggested yesterday that the UK should be more generous towards ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, telling LBC's Tonight with Andrew Marr: "I hope [refugees minister Richard Harrington] is allowed if we want to go for shorter visas, or it's just Ukrainian passports, and perhaps something else, let's find a way to get it done."

Mike Adamson, chief executive at British Red Cross, said:???"Right now, as countries across Europe have done, the UK government must waive visa requirements for those fleeing Ukraine. Security???checks???can still be carried out when people travel or arrive in the UK."

A government spokesperson said: "The UK stands shoulder-to-shoulder with the people of Ukraine and we have taken urgent action to process visas at speed for all those eligible to the Ukraine family scheme, while carrying out vital security checks.

"We have protected appointments at all of our visa application centres to ensure there is sufficient capacity and deployed extra staff to help people through the process as quickly as possible."

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Government accused of putting 'paperwork over people' in Ukraine refugee crisis*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YG-3X21-DY4H-K333-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 9, 2022 Wednesday 1:50 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 734 words

**Byline:** Flora Thompson

**Highlight:** MPs heard from charities and lawyers working with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

**Body**

The [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) is prioritising "paperwork over people" in its response to the [***Ukraine***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ***refugee crisis***, a charity boss has told [*MPs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mps).

Enver Solomon, chief executive of the Refugee Council, urged ministers to urgently waive visa applications for people fleeing war-torn Ukraine in what he described as the "worst refugee crisis in [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) since the Second World War".

He told the Commons Home Affairs Committee on Wednesday: "Unfortunately, I don't think we're in a very good place. We're looking at the worst refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War, we have a scheme in place that's only issued hundreds of visas to allow Ukrainians to come here.

I think the Government is making a fundamental error here

Enver Solomon, Refugee Council

"We have Ukrainians queuing up in Calais, at the visa application centre in Poland, unable to access documentation.

"And I think the Government is making a fundamental error here. It's not adopting a 'refugees first' approach, which it should be adopting. It seems to be adopting an approach which is 'paperwork over people' - people who have lost everything through no fault of their own."

Mr Solomon claimed the Government had decided to "effectively tinker" with a standard visa scheme "rather than respond in a way that is required to an urgent humanitarian crisis", branding this a "gross oversight".

"I think it unfortunately sends the message to Ukrainians that 'we're not welcoming you', we're not creating a system that is quick, fair and efficient to enable those Ukrainians to come to the UK who want to come here," he added.

Describing waiving visa applications so people could be fast-tracked to the UK, given recognition as a refugee and a limited period of leave to remain as the "best immediate short-term solution", he also warned that a long-term plan is needed.

Arguing that a permanent humanitarian visa should be created, he added: "We need to think medium and long term because this crisis is not going to go away. I think it's only going to get worse and I think it's going to play out over months and years."

We are also very concerned with the rhetoric and that it gives people false hope, when there is no immediate hope for them to come because none of the schemes accommodate them

Zoe Bantleman, Immigration Law Practitioners' Association

Although acknowledging security is a "legitimate concern", Mr Solomon said there are "mechanisms that you can use to address those challenges" and suggested the Government is "trying to find a reason for justifying its very restrictive, limited approach".

Officers can carry out security and biometric checks at the border, he told the committee, adding: "I don't think it is an insurmountable issue and one that can't be overcome."

"The British people want to welcome Ukrainians and, unfortunately, I think the Government is out of step in its approach with where public opinion is at the moment," he said.

Helen Manis, one of a group of immigration lawyers who are giving advice to Ukrainians pro bono, described the visa scheme as "unworkable" and claimed it has the effect of turning people away from the UK.

And Zoe Bantleman, of the Immigration Law Practitioners' Association (Ilpa), told MPs: "We are also very concerned with the rhetoric and that it gives people false hope, when there is no immediate hope for them to come because none of the schemes accommodate them."

People didn't choose to be put in this situation and they need to be helped out of it as quickly, as compassionately, as possible

Iryna Terlecky, Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain

Iryna Terlecky, of the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain, called on ministers to make the process as "simple as possible", adding: "[*People*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/people) didn't choose to be put in this situation and they need to be helped out of it as quickly, as compassionately, as possible.

"There really needs to be a very significant, not only ramping up of resource but actually a ramping up of simplicity and compassion."

Committee chairman Diana Johnson said she will write to Home Secretary Priti Patel and Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi after the MPs heard warnings of potentially tens of thousands of children who have been "taken to the border by their parents or carers and left at the border alone".

Mr Solomon added: "I think we're going to be seeing a significant number of very vulnerable, unaccompanied children in desperate need of protection."

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees housed with suspected gangsters*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BT1-DFJ1-F072-400T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

April 14, 2024 Sunday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 3

**Length:** 1326 words

**Byline:** HOLLY BANCROFT SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the horrors of war to find sanctuary in British homes were sent to live with suspected gangsters under the government's flagship Homes for Ukraine scheme, The Independent can reveal.

People with suspected links to serious or organised crime were among those approved as hosts under the scheme, which was set up in 2022 to encourage warm-hearted homeowners to lend a spare room to those fleeing Vladimir Putin's invasion.

In the worst cases, Ukrainian families and individuals "just disappeared", according to one council worker, while others were forced to work for their hosts or were charged rent. In one stark example, a couple with a young child were sent to live with a convicted paedophile.

Labour MP Alex Davies-Jones, the shadow safeguarding minister, said the findings, uncovered by this publication, raise serious concerns about the safeguarding and the screening of hosts, as she called for a "full and proper investigation".

Eleanor Lyons, the independent anti-slavery commissioner, described the reports as concerning. She added: "We know traffickers often target vulnerable people, so we must do all we can to support displaced Ukrainians and prevent them from becoming vulnerable to exploitation."

The Independent can also report that:

\*Council workers involved with the scheme reported refugees being forced to work for their hosts on farms and charged rent

\*One worker claimed some sponsors had only agreed to host young, female Ukrainians "for the purposes of exploiting them for sexual gratification

\*"Around a quarter of eligible councils - 37 out of around 150 - said they had been alerted to a serious safeguarding concern about a host, which can include child protection concerns

\*At least eight people who signed up for the scheme had suspected links to serious or organised crime

\*One local authority worker told researchers that one applicant was found to have a trafficking conviction

Maris Stratulis, England national director at the British Association of Social Workers, said her organisation had raised concerns about the scheme since the beginning. "For some individuals and families, this scheme has literally been a lifeline and a safe and positive experience," she said. "For others, fleeing to 'perceived' safety has not been a reality - their human rights and needs have not been protected."

She added that poor coordination between the government and local councils "has created opportunities for children and adults to be lost in a system and vulnerable to abuse and exploitation".

According to the figures, which The Independent obtained through a freedom of information request, at least 93 serious safeguarding alerts were raised across the UK over sponsors who put themselves forward for the scheme. Eight of these were about the links potential hosts had to serious or organised crime.

A further 374 warnings, known as "adverse hits", were sent by the government to councils about Homes for Ukraine sponsors, the data shows. These hits occur when the host has failed Home Office checks.

In the London borough of Croydon, the council received alerts from the Home Office about two separate sponsors' connections to serious and organised crime. The council said these sponsor arrangements were swiftly "discontinued" after the alert was received. Suffolk County Council received a similar alert. The Ukrainian guests were offered an immediate transfer to another home, but they turned this offer down and later found alternative accommodation with friends.

Another alert over a sponsor's connection to organised crime was received by Nottinghamshire County Council, resulting in a "subsequent guest change of accommodation". A case was also flagged in Bedford, where the guests had not yet arrived to live with a sponsor who was suspected of having potential links to organised crime. The council insisted its checks were "robust".

Sheffield City Council dealt with three serious safeguarding alerts: one sponsor with links to serious and organised crime, one sponsor who had accommodation requests linked to multiple commercial properties, and one case in which the sponsor was abroad and offered to pay for a Ukrainian to live in a hotel room.

In the case of the crime-linked host, the Ukrainian guests arrived in the UK but their whereabouts were unknown. The council had to raise a missing persons report with the police, who located them in private rented accommodation in another city.

In a case publicised in Northern Ireland, a couple with a young child went to live with a convicted paedophile for a number of weeks before he was deemed unsuitable to be a sponsor. A criminal record check by the Home Office had reportedly not flagged his conviction, and the family had moved into a mobile home on the man's property before further checks had been completed.

The social workers' report, compiled by researchers from University College London and the organisation Focus on Labour Exploitation, found that there were strong concerns over the UK's Ukraine schemes. One local authority worker told researchers that a host involved in the Homes for Ukraine scheme had been found to have a trafficking conviction.

Another worker in the east of England said: "We had a number of families and individuals just disappear. Once in the UK they just disappeared, and we had no way of knowing if they were safe or in circumstances which placed them at risk - for example, around labour exploitation, criminal exploitation."

Another interviewee said they had seen cases where hosts had "agreed to host young, attractive, female Ukrainians for the purposes of exploiting them". They added: "We've heard cases where entire families have been hosted and the host has been making efforts to isolate the young female from the rest of the family."

Councillors and people who worked on the scheme also said they had come across cases where refugees had been forced to work for their hosts. These cases included farmers in Northern Ireland reportedly using the scheme to get people to the UK to work for them, and then also charging them rent.

Speaking about the blurred line around labour exploitation, one council worker in the East Midlands explained: "The sponsors are saying, 'Oh, here's the car, could you go and pick my children up?' or 'I won't be back till 9pm, could you babysit the children in the evening?' The Ukrainians feel that they're compelled to do it because they're living in their house rent-free."

One member of a strategic migration partnership - a council-led group designed to implement refugee schemes - said that during the scramble of getting thousands of Ukrainians to safety, they had to "find a balance between eliminating every single risk, which is just not possible".

Many participants told researchers that visas for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** had been issued before the pre-arrival DBS and accommodation checks were completed. The checks were then failed, and a new host had to be found at short notice or guests were reluctant to leave.

In a briefing given to MPs in February by the Local Government Association, it was noted that local authorities were continuing to report cases where visas were being issued to Ukrainians before councils had carried out sponsor checks.

Safeguarding alerts usually go to county councils, but some borough councils also provided responses. A handful of these councils provided a figure of less than five, due to data protection, meaning that the number of serious safeguarding alerts could be even higher.

A government spokesperson said: "Keeping sponsors and guests safe is a priority for the Homes for Ukraine scheme. All sponsors and all adults living in a sponsor's household are subject to stringent checks before they are allowed to host a Ukrainian refugee, and we would urge local councils to contact the police if they suspect any exploitation."

More than 180,000 visas have been issued to refugees through the Ukraine sponsorship scheme, government data shows.

**Load-Date:** April 14, 2024

**End of Document**



[*UK not doing 'anywhere near enough' for Ukrainian refugees, says Sturgeon*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y2-5R01-DY4H-K09D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 1:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:4

**Length:** 745 words

**Byline:** Adam Forrest

**Highlight:** Scotland's first minister wants No 10 to adopt a similar approach to Ireland

**Body**

Boris Johnson's government is "not doing anywhere near enough" to help refugees fleeing the "horror" of the Russian invasion in Ukraine, Scotland's first minister [*Nicola Sturgeon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nicola-sturgeon) has said.

The SNP leader challenged UK ministers to make it easier for refugees to come to the UK, after it was revealed on Sunday that only "around 50" visas had been issued.

Ms Sturgeon said it was "unconscionable" that those who have made difficult journeys to escape the fighting and shelling had to "jump through bureaucratic hoops" before they can enter the UK.

As rising numbers of Ukrainians look to leave their country in the wake of the Russian invasion, the first minister insisted: "All countries must step up and fully play their part, and the UK is not yet doing so."

Ms Sturgeon's comments came in the wake of France urging Britain to do more to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** trying to come to the UK from Calais.

French interior minister [*Gerald Darmanin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gerald-darmanin) on Sunday said it was "inhumane" of the UK to turn away refugees arriving at the French port city if they did not have a valid visa.

Ms Sturgeon insisted that "on the issue of refugees the UK is not doing anywhere near enough".

She told radio station LBC: "I think the system that is in place of having people fleeing the terror in Ukraine spending hours and hours and hours on arduous journeys then having to jump through bureaucratic hoops is unconscionable.

"We only have to compare the 50 or so visas that have been granted for entry to the UK so far with more than 1,000 Ukrainians who have already managed to enter the Republic of [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) , a country much, much smaller than the UK.

"And what Ireland is doing is what the UK should be doing - it is allowing people in and then doing the paperwork once they have managed to get that refuge and sanctuary here."

Ms Sturgeon continued: "I think if the UK government does not significantly change its approach here then increasingly there are going to be people looking at the UK and concluding that on a humanitarian level it is not doing nearly enough to help those fleeing horror and terror in Ukraine.

"We already have 1.5 million people who have been displaced, that number is only going to grow in the days and weeks ahead."

Boris Johnson was unable to provide the latest figures on Monday but told reporters: "We're processing thousands right now."

The Home Office refused to disclose fresh figures, with a spokeswoman saying the department would not be providing a "running commentary".

Ms Patel later told MPs in the Commons that the claim only 50 visas have been issued to Ukrainians under the family visa scheme is "inaccurate", and said the latest figure will be published on Monday evening.

Downing Street has clarified that there is no current UK visa centre in Calais, following a row with Paris over ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving at the French port town.

France claimed that 150 refugees who had travelled to Calais in the hope of coming to the UK were told they had to apply at visa centres in Paris or Brussels.

But home secretary Priti Patel claimed the French government was "wrong" and said "the British government is not turning anybody around or turning anybody back at all."

Asked if there was a visa centre at Calais, Mr Johnson's spokesman said: "I don't believe there's one there now, but we'll keep it under review."

Asked if refugees in Calais needed to travel to Paris or Brussels to make their application, he said: "I believe that's correct, but there's a helpline in place."

However, Ms Patel later told MPs that there is a British office near Calais that can help Ukrainians with their visa applications.

Meanwhile, No 10 said the "humanitarian route" reportedly being examined by the home secretary was in fact a sponsorship scheme that had already been announced by the government.

Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer has accused the Home Office of a chaotic response to the ***Ukraine*** ***refugee crisis***.

Speaking at King's College London, he said: "The Home Office is in a complete mess about this, they keep changing the rules, the stories of what is actually happening on the ground contradict what the Home Office say."

Sir Keir added: "They have got to sort this out ... there should be a simple route to sanctuary for those that are fleeing for their lives."

Labour MP Chris Bryant attacked foreign secretary Liz Truss over the reported 50 visas issued for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, asking her is she was "ashamed" and adding: "Your department should have been preparing for it."

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'Mean-spirited' UK under growing pressure to waive visas for Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YM-9HR1-DY4H-K205-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 10, 2022 Thursday 2:29 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 1105 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Government accused of 'lagging behind' other European countries in response to refugee crisis

**Body**

The [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) ambassador has urged the British government to temporarily lift all visa requirements for those fleeing his country, with pressure increasing on ministers to act over a system that has been heavily criticised.

Around 850 people have so far been issued a visa under the [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) 's family migration scheme, announced on Friday - despite tens of thousands with family links to the UK applying.

Vadym Prystaiko said that if bureaucratic procedures were "simplified" it would "definitely resolve all the issues". He told the Home Affairs Select Committee on Wednesday: "I don't expect many of them to come. I don't want to see these pictures of people banging at the doors in [*Calais*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/calais) and scratching the doors which are quite sealed."

Campaigners have accused the UK of "lagging behind" other European countries over its response to the ***Ukraine*** ***refugee crisis*** by welcoming a "pitiful" number of refugees in the first two weeks of the war. The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman called for "immediate action" to enable refugees to get their cases dealt with swiftly by removing "unnecessary delays and bureaucracy" in the visa application process.

The Independent has set up a petition calling on the UK government to be at the forefront of the international community offering aid and support to those in Ukraine. To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) .

Ombudsman Rob Behrens said: "It is vital the Home Office acts to correct failings in its handling of visa applications, especially failings we have previously reported and which we are seeing repeated here.

"In this horrendous situation swift action is needed to make sure the process of getting a visa is simple, accessible and quick. Lives depend on it."

Hundreds of Ukrainians have arrived in the French port town of Calais since the Russian invasion began in the hope of reaching their loved ones in Britain, but have not been allowed to apply to the scheme from there.

Confusion arose on Wednesday after the [*Home Office announced*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-visa-refugees-lille-home-office-b2032208.html) that a temporary visa centre in Lille - some 70 miles away - which was initially thought to be a facility where ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** could travel to submit their visa applications, would only work on a referral basis.

The department was also accused of telling "outright lies" after [*The Independent revealed*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugees-calais-lille-eurostar-home-office-uk-b2031949.html) that a Home Office official had wrongly claimed that ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Calais could obtain free [*Eurostar*](https://indy-web-prod.brightsites.co.uk/topic/eurostar) tickets to travel to a UK visa centre in [*Lille*](https://indy-web-prod.brightsites.co.uk/topic/lille) - when in fact this route does not exist.

Meanwhile, thousands of refugees grappled with the "unbearable" UK visa application process in other European countries, which has seen many forced to [*wait for hours in the cold*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugees-poland-uk-visa-home-office-b2031118.html) and travel for miles.

Refugees who attended a UK visa centre in [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) to submit applications to join relatives in the UK [*were told that they must travel 170 miles*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukrainian-refugees-visa-warsaw-rzeszow-uk-b2032259.html) across the country in order to complete the process, prompting those going through the process to describe it as "unbearable".

Enver Solomon, chief executive of the Refugee Council, described the government's approach to helping Ukrainian people as "mean spirited" and accused Britain of "lagging behind our European neighbours" in its response.

"The government's family visa scheme is extremely limited and restricted, with visas granted to hundreds of people - a pitiful number, and a fraction of the need and application numbers," he said.

"The government needs to urgently waive visa requirements to enable Ukrainians to travel to the UK more easily and then grant them refugee protection as quickly as possible after arrival."

Sonya Sceats, chief executive at Freedom from Torture, echoed his remarks, saying: "This government's pitiful response to the plight of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** shames Britain.

"Not only are these failing visa-based schemes causing intolerable heartbreak for Ukrainians blocked from reaching safety here by all the red tape. It is time for the prime minister to listen to the British people and abandon his insistence on visas for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***."

The government's approach to the crisis came under further criticism after [*it emerged*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-russia-ireland-patel-refugees-b2032329.html) that home secretary Priti Patel told the Irish government she was concerned that the country's welcoming policy towards ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** would allow them to reach the UK by the back door.

An [*anonymous briefing from a UK government source*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-refugees-home-office-ireland-b2030874.html) on Tuesday suggested that Ukrainian criminals or drug dealers could take advantage of the Anglo-Irish common travel area to gain access to mainland Britain - a suggestion was labelled as "disgraceful" and "absolutely terrible" by members of the Irish parliament.

It comes after the government faced a barrage of criticism from Tory MPs over its response, with ministers accused by its own backbenchers of showing "too little compassion" and urged to "get a grip".

David Cameron suggested on Wednesday that the UK should be more generous towards ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, telling LBC's Tonight with Andrew Marr: "I hope [refugees minister Richard Harrington] is allowed if we want to go for shorter visas, or it's just Ukrainian passports, and perhaps something else, let's find a way to get it done."

Mike Adamson, chief executive at British Red Cross, said:â¯"Right now, as countries across Europe have done, the UK government must waive visa requirements for those fleeing Ukraine. Securityâ¯checksâ¯can still be carried out when people travel or arrive in the UK."

A government spokesperson said: "The UK stands shoulder-to-shoulder with the people of Ukraine and we have taken urgent action to process visas at speed for all those eligible to the Ukraine family scheme, while carrying out vital security checks.

"We have protected appointments at all of our visa application centres to ensure there is sufficient capacity and deployed extra staff to help people through the process as quickly as possible."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*VP Harris heads to Romania as Ukraine refugee crisis grows*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YV-X2J1-JBNF-W1W6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 11, 2022 Friday 6:27 AM GMT

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**Length:** 490 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Vice President Kamala Harris and Romania's president will meet Friday to discuss growing concerns about the influx of displaced people fleeing Ukraine for elsewhere in eastern Europe due to Russia's invasion

**Body**

Vice President Kamala Harris and [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) 's president will meet Friday to discuss growing concerns about the influx of displaced people fleeing Ukraine for Romania and elsewhere in eastern Europe due to Russia's invasion.

It's a problem that Biden administration officials and European leaders warn will likely get more complicated in the days and weeks ahead.

Harris' talks in Bucharest with President Klaus Iohannis come after she spent Thursday in Poland, which has already welcomed some 1.5 million Ukrainians since the invasion began. She met in [*Warsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warsaw) with Polish President [*Andrzej Duda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/andrzej-duda) and Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, and others in hopes of getting a fuller picture of the unfolding humanitarian crisis.

The southeastern European country of Romania - a nation of about 19 million - had taken in more 84,000 displaced people as of Tuesday, according to United Nations data. Other countries on NATO's eastern flank, including Hungary, Moldova and Slovakia, have also welcomed tens of thousands of refugees.

Harris said the U.S. was "absolutely prepared" to support those "who understand the moral obligation we should feel to help people who are fleeing harm and seeking refuge; the burden we should all be prepared to take on to support those people who are fleeing their home when they don't want to leave."

Duda, in a press conference with Harris, said Polish leaders are "aware that the problem is growing and that this problem is increasing."

"We have to somehow handle it, and we do not have the experience," he said.

Overall, more than 2.3 million people have fled Ukraine since the start of the war. And the number of displaced people continues to grow daily. The United Nations warns that up to 5 million people could flee Ukraine. That would make it the biggest humanitarian crisis in Europe since World War II.

Duda said he had asked Harris to relay to President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) that Poland would like to see expedited visa procedures for Ukrainians who have family living the United States so that they could resettle in the U.S. at least temporarily.

Harris said most refugees who have fled Ukraine prefer to remain in Europe. Earlier this month, the administration offered humanitarian relief to Ukrainians in the United States, which could protect thousands from being deported to their war-torn homeland. Ukrainians already in the U.S. would be able to stay in the U.S. for up to 18 months under the federal program known as Temporary Protected Status.

The Pentagon announced last month it was deploying a Stryker squadron of about 1,000 additional soldiers to Romania, a NATO member, as the Biden administration looks to bolster the military alliance's presence on NATO's eastern flank.

U.S. officials remain concerned about Romania's vulnerability in the midst of Russian activity in the Black Sea.

Before departing Warsaw for Romania on Friday, Harris was scheduled to visit with U.S. and Polish troops.

**Load-Date:** March 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Europe's contrasting responses to Ukraine refugee crisis prompt criticism*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WK-J9M1-JBNF-W4DG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 28, 2022 Monday 8:15 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 552 words

**Byline:** Namita Singh

**Highlight:** 'Just to put it bluntly, These are not refugees from Syria, these are refugees from neighbouring Ukraine,' said one correspondent

**Body**

While [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has left hundreds fleeing the country, it has also brought to the fore claims of racism in the way the conflict is being covered by international media and in the policies of countries where immigrants are seeking refuge.

Ukraine's neighbours, including [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) , [*Bulgaria*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bulgaria) , [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) , have welcomed incoming refugees from the country and have provided them safe havens. That though in some instances that some countries can have different policies towards those refugees who arrive from conflict zones away from Europe.

"These are not the refugees we are used to. These people are Europeans," Bulgaria's president Rumen Radev said about ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** earlier this week.

"These people are intelligent, they are educated people... This is not the refugee wave we have been used to, people we were not sure about their identity, people with unclear pasts, who could have been even terrorists."

"In other words," he added, "there is not a single European country now which is afraid of the current wave of refugees."

Syrian journalist Okba Mohammad called these comments a mix of "racism and [*Islamophobia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/islamophobia) ". A refugee himself, Mohammad had to flee his hometown of Dara in 2018. Now the journalist, who lives in Spain, said he was notsurprised by the remarks.

"A refugee is a refugee, whether European, African or Asian," he said, as he recounted living in an underground shelter to protect himself from Russian bombs, struggling to board an overcrowded bus and being separated from his family at the borders.

The change in the tone of some of anti-migration leaders after the Ukraine war has also been telling.

"We aren't going to let anyone in," the [*Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orban*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-putin-sanctions-hungary-orban-b2023984.html) had said in December last year, as he disallowed Middle Eastern and African refugees from entering Europe via Hungary.

"We are letting everyone in," Mr Orban now says in the aftermath of Russia's invasion.

Commentators and journalists have not escaped criticism either.

The racism is flowing freely like water! [*https://t.co/C8DA6VhILb*](https://t.co/C8DA6VhILb) - Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (@KeeangaYamahtta) [*February 27, 2022*](https://twitter.com/KeeangaYamahtta/status/1497935720882839555?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

NBC News correspondent Kelly Cobiella was criticised on social media for airing views carrying racist undertones.

"Just to put it bluntly, These are not refugees from Syria, these are refugees from neighbouring Ukraine... These are Christian, they're white, they're very similar," the journalist can be heard saying in a clip from a broadcast from Poland in a clip.

On BBC News, Ukraine's former deputy general prosecutor, David Sakvarelidze came in for widespread criticism on social media when he said: "It's very emotional for me because I see European people with blonde hair and blue eyes being killed every day with Putin's missiles and his helicopters and his rockets."

[*Al Jazeera*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/al-jazeera) 's English presenter Peter Dobbie on Sunday also described Ukrainians fleeing the war as "prosperous, middle class people" who "are not obviously refugees trying to get away from areas in the [*Middle East*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/middle-east) that are still in a big state of war; these are not people trying to get away from areas in North Africa, they look like any European family that you would live next door to."

The channel later issued an apology, calling the comments "inappropriate, insensitive and irresponsible".

**Load-Date:** February 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Visa uncertainty adding to ‘insecurity’ for Ukrainian refugees, campaigner warns*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69N2-Y5D1-DY4H-K3JG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

November 16, 2023 Thursday 5:44 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 485 words

**Byline:** Aine Fox

**Highlight:** The first visas issued as part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme – launched last year following the Russian invasion – will expire in March 2025.

**Body**

A campaigner and host for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** has voiced concerns after a [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) minister declined to rule out bringing in a fee for those who have fled to the UK amid the ongoing war.

Immigration minister Robert Jenrick said the potential extension of the visa period for Ukrainians in the UK is being kept under “consistent review”, adding that this “includes whether to require a fee”.

The first visas issued as part of the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine scheme – launched last year following the Russian invasion – will expire in March 2025.

We keep the need for a possible extension of UK sanctuary, beyond March 2025, under consistent review. This includes whether to require a feeThe Home Office has said it is reviewing what might be needed beyond that date.

Immigration minister Robert Jenrick

[*Scottish National Party*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scottish-national-party) MP Patrick Grady had asked a question in [*Parliament*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/parliament) about whether the [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) would ensure there are “no fees chargeable for any extension to the Ukrainian visa schemes”.

In a written response earlier this week, Mr Jenrick said: “In line with the situation in Ukraine, working closely with the Ukrainian Government, as well as our international counterparts, we keep the need for a possible extension of UK sanctuary, beyond March 2025, under consistent review. This includes whether to require a fee.

“We are mindful that permission will start to expire, for the first arrivals under our Ukrainian schemes, from March 2025, and their need for certainty beyond that point to help them to plan ahead.”

They are not here because they want to be, they are here because there is a war in their country and they can't go back yet

Kitty Hamilton, Vigil for Visas

Kitty Hamilton, co-founder of the advocacy group Vigil for Visas, has hosted a number of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, and said that so long as the reasons for Ukrainians needing to come to the UK do not change, “I don’t see why the rules for their stay should change”.

She told the PA news agency: “They are not here because they want to be, they are here because there is a war in their country and they can’t go back yet.

“As we said right from the beginning, the vast majority aren’t going to stay much beyond the end of this war. The problem is that we don’t know when that will be. It seems unfair to add to this insecurity with a lack of clarity on whether our guests can stay here in the UK.”

A report by the National Audit Office last month said Ukrainians must be given certainty over their futures including around visa extensions.

The report said: “The Government will soon need to take important decisions about the future of the scheme, including whether to extend visas beyond three years, and whether to extend funding for local authorities and sponsors, which currently finishes before visas expire.

The Government, responding to the report, said it will give an update on the future of the scheme “well before the first visas expire”.

**Load-Date:** November 16, 2023

**End of Document**



[*'It is embarrassing': Minister admits UK was not geared up for Ukraine refugee crisis*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6558-V8V1-JBNF-W024-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 5, 2022 Tuesday 10:53 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 521 words

**Byline:** Eleanor Sly

**Highlight:** 'It is embarrassing to me that the system is taking too long,' says Lord Richard Harrington

**Body**

The UK government's scheme to house refugees fleeing war in Ukraine has taken longer than it should, the refugees minister has admitted.

Lord Richard Harrington, who was recently appointed the role, said it is "embarrassing" the Homes For Ukraine scheme "is taking so long".

Speaking to LBC, Lord Harrington admitted the government was "not geared up" for the volume of Ukrainians seeking refuge in the UK.

Asked why he thought this was the case, he replied: "Because it was a slow and bureaucratic process, with sending information to different places, waiting for an answer, sending it, waiting for an answer.

"The Home Office and the British government generally, was not geared up to this kind of volume."

He added: "It is embarrassing to me that the system is taking too long."

However, Lord Harrington said that more recently the system has been finessed, including cutting the application form down "quite a lot," with the help of home secretary Priti Patel.

Lord Harrington later admitted to a caller who had faced difficulties trying to house refugees that he did not know what the hold-ups were.

"I just don't know where they are," said the caller, Victoria. "Is there a problem? Should we be doing something?

"Nobody's been in contact.... you're going round and round in circles... and it's really, really desperate."

Lord Harrington replied: "What Victoria says is just unacceptable and I take responsibility for it. I don't know what to say... I honestly don't know.

"The system should work better than this, it obviously has worked better than this otherwise we wouldn't have issued more than 8,000 visas, but I can't understand it, why there's been this time lag."

It comes after the first government-backed matching scheme was launched last week to link UK sponsors with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, amid warnings that schemes helping people reach safety must not become "Tinder for sex traffickers".

Reset Communities and Refugees - a charity that has led UK community sponsorship schemes since 2018 - has launched a service to pair sponsors and refugees, provide training and carry out initial eligibility and safeguarding checks.

It has received £300,000 in initial funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

The charity launched the initial phase of the programme on Friday and hopes to scale up to match future demand.

It is the first and only matching scheme to receive Government backing.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** April 5, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Thousands of Ukrainian refugees can access UK banking services now*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67MG-NYV1-JBNF-W0TW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 24, 2023 Friday 6:26 AM GMT

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**Section:** MONEY; Version:1

**Length:** 387 words

**Byline:** Vicky Shaw

**Highlight:** More than 70,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** can now receive their income, send money, and pay for goods through a UK bank account

**Body**

Tens of thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have been able to access banking services in the UK, according to the [*Treasury*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/treasury).

UK basic bank account providers were brought together, with action taken to remove barriers to opening UK bank accounts faced by Ukrainian nationals, such as the lack of a conventional ID.

This has helped more than 70,000 people to build their lives more easily in the UK by enabling them to receive their income, send money and pay for goods.

Basic bank accounts allow people with a limited credit history to access and carry out everyday banking.

We will continue to help as many ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** as possible access the banking services they need to build a life here

Economic Secretary to the Treasury Andrew Griffith

In general, basic bank accounts must be fee-free for standard use and do not have a borrowing facility, such as an overdraft, to help prevent people getting into unaffordable debt.

Economic Secretary to the Treasury Andrew Griffith said: “We will continue to help as many ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** as possible access the banking services they need to build a life here – and I’d like to thank UK banks and building societies for their support to date.

“A year on from the invasion, Putin should be left in no doubt that the West will not waver in its support for Ukraine and its people.”

Under the Payment Account Regulations 2015, the nine biggest personal current account (PCA) providers in the UK are legally required to offer basic bank accounts to customers who do not have a bank account or who are not eligible for a bank’s standard current account.

The nine institutions are Barclays, the [*Co-operative Bank*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/co-operative-bank) , HSBC UK, Lloyds Banking Group (which also includes Halifax and Bank of Scotland brands), Nationwide Building Society, NatWest Group (including RBS and [*Ulster Bank*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ulster-bank) brands), [*Santander UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/santander-uk) , TSB and Virgin Money.

A spokesperson for trade association [*UK Finance*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk-finance) said: “UK Finance and the industry is proud to have provided support to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and we will continue to do so.

“Last year we worked at pace with members and Government to make sure banking services were available to those fleeing the conflict and we are pleased so many could access an account which has proved vital to helping them settle, and in day-to-day life.”

**Load-Date:** February 24, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees urged to consider becoming bus drivers*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66T9-1GM1-JBNF-W4V5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

November 7, 2022 Monday 1:46 PM GMT

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**Section:** BUSINESS; Version:1

**Length:** 295 words

**Byline:** Neil Lancefield

**Highlight:** Public transport operator Go-Ahead is working with the Department for Work and Pensions to help refugees take on vacant roles.

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the UK are being urged to consider becoming bus drivers amid a major shortage.

Public transport operator [*Go-Ahead*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/go-ahead) is working with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to help them take on vacant roles.

The country has suffered from a lack of bus drivers since the end of coronavirus lockdowns.

We want to help local people live their lives to the full

Ed Wills, Brighton & Hove and Metrobus

Industry body the Confederation of Passenger Transport recently estimated that 9% of bus driver positions are vacant.

Ukrainian bus drivers can exchange their licence for a UK version under existing rules.

Go-Ahead’s [*Sussex*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sussex) bus companies [*Brighton*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brighton) & [*Hove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hove) and Metrobus have introduced a new policy and training programme to support ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** back into work.

They previously required foreign bus drivers in the UK to wait a year before applying for jobs.

Licence-holding ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** assessed by the DWP to have a good understanding of [*English*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/english) have been invited by the companies to a recruitment open day on Thursday.

Anita Pain, employer adviser for Brighton and Hove Jobcentre, said: “It’s terrific how businesses have come together to support the Ukrainian community.

“We are delighted to have been a part of this innovative and fast-paced approach to fill vacancies in our city.”

Ed Wills, managing director of Brighton & Hove and Metrobus, said: “We provide a first class bus service for our community.

“We want to help local people live their lives to the full whether that’s driving them to work, school or to meet up with friends and family.

“As a company we also have the ability to offer jobs to people from Ukraine who are here to start a new and more peaceful life.

“I look forward to having more recruitment events like this in the future.”

**Load-Date:** November 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Fire engulfs 400-year-old hotel ‘housing Ukrainian refugees’*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67SR-Y2R1-JBNF-W18J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 16, 2023 Thursday 5:37 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 271 words

**Byline:** Alana Calvert

**Highlight:** The fire was thought to have broken out shortly after 1am on Thursday at a property on North Street before spreading to the roof of the Angel Inn.

**Body**

A 400-year-old hotel that was said to be housing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** was among buildings engulfed by a fire in Midhurst, West Sussex.

The fire was thought to have broken out shortly after 1am on Thursday at a property on North Street before spreading to the roof of the Angel Inn next door.

Local resident Hilton Holloway, who witnessed the fire, told the PA news agency around 30 people, including some children, were evacuated from the hotel.

“There were a number of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the hotel, which had around 15 rooms,” he said.

“I spoke to one young woman who seemed relatively calm.”

Photos and video taken by Mr Holloway, who lives opposite the hotel, showed the spread of the fire from an adjoining building to the roof of the Angel Inn.

West Sussex Fire and Rescue Services called the fire “significant”. Ten fire engines, an aerial ladder platform, water carrier and off-road vehicle responded to the incident.

Shortly after 6am the fire service said the incident had “escalated” and 14 fire engines were on the scene tackling the blaze.

“Over 30 people have been evacuated from the building and firefighters are working hard to bring the fire under control,” West Sussex Fire and Rescue Services said.

Speaking from the scene, Area Manager Richard Abbot advised commuters North Street would remain closed and asked the public to avoid the area.

“It is too early in the incident to know the cause of the fire, however we will be investigating as soon as it is safe to do so,” he said.

[*Sussex Police*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sussex-police) , which sent officers to the scene, warned road closures would be in place in the local area.

No casualties have been reported.

**Load-Date:** March 16, 2023

**End of Document**



[*UK support for Ukrainian refugees already waning*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65WV-SXT1-JCS0-D13S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

July 11, 2022 Monday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 7

**Length:** 628 words

**Byline:** LIZZIE DEARDEN

**Body**

Public support for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** is already waning in Britain, polling suggests, as the war continues to rage.

Polling by YouGov shows that in March, three-quarters of people supported resettling Ukrainians in the UK and 42 per cent thought the figure should be in the tens of thousands "at least".

But the figures have now dropped to 71 per cent of people supporting resettlement, with 29 per cent wanting to see tens of thousands of refugees welcomed.

There is no resettlement scheme for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, with the government instead offering three-year visas - that do not amount to a grant of asylum - to people who have relatives in the UK or are sponsored by volunteers.

So far, there have been 175,100 applications to the scheme, 148,300 of which have been granted, and 91,000 Ukraine visa holders have arrived in the UK.

Ministers set up a bespoke Afghan resettlement process following the Taliban takeover last year, but YouGov's polling shows that only half the public support it. The scheme, which started in January, has been applied to some of the 15,000 people who were already in the UK after being evacuated from Afghanistan.

Although the figures have fallen, the research indicates that British people are more supportive of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** than those from other nations.

YouGov said its research suggested that the "British public feel less generous and more morally conflicted about refugees from Afghanistan, Syria and Somalia, compared to Ukraine, with Conservative voters particularly likely to take a harder stance on refugees from these countries".

When asked the same question for each nationality, 71 per cent of people said they would support resettling ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, half said they would support resettling Afghan refugees, 48 per cent said they would support resettling Syrians and 40 per cent would support the same for Somalian refugees.

The figures are particularly stark for Conservative voters. While almost three-quarters welcomed ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, only 37 per cent said the same for Afghans, under a third for Syrians and a fifth for Somalis.

Tory supporters were also more likely to see Afghan, Syrian and Somali refugees as "a threat" than Labour supporters or the public at large, although just 5 per cent thought the same for Ukrainians. Conservatives were also less likely to believe the UK has a "moral obligation" to offer asylum.

The Reset Communities and Refugees charity said it was still receiving a "high level of interest" from people offering to accommodate Ukrainians in their homes. But chief executive Kate Brown added: "We know levels of interest change according to the news agenda and cost of living pressures, and that compassion fatigue can also set in.

"Even so, we are continuing to see high levels of interest from people in hosting Ukrainian people in their own homes, having trained more than 3,000 sponsors under our Homes for Ukraine matching service. At the same time, we have had record numbers of applications from volunteer community sponsorship groups coming together to welcome refugees from a range of countries."

Tim Naor Hilton, the chief executive of Refugee Action, said: "The only thing that should matter in our refugee protection policy is a person's need for protection. There is no wrong type of refugee.

"We believe that the public has huge compassion for those seeking safety. However, it is the government that has sought to stoke up divisions by pitting one group of refugees against another, setting up bespoke resettlement schemes for some while creating an ugly deportation plan to Rwanda for others.

"What we need is a refugee protection system that is built on compassion for all those that need it."

YouGov carried out its polling between 19 and 25 May and weighted the results

**Load-Date:** July 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Huge fire engulfs 400-year-old hotel ‘housing Ukrainian refugees’*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67SS-KD81-DY4H-K4CY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 16, 2023 Thursday 9:02 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 271 words

**Byline:** Alana Calvert

**Highlight:** The fire was thought to have broken out shortly after 1am before spreading to the roof of a pub

**Body**

A 400-year-old hotel understood to be housing [***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/ukrainian-refugees-fleeing-war-b2024051.html) was among buildings engulfed by a fire in Midhurst, [*West Sussex*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/west-sussex).

The fire was thought to have broken out shortly after 1am on Thursday at a property on North Street before spreading to the roof of the Angel Inn next door.

Local resident Hilton Holloway, who witnessed the fire, told the PA news agency around 30 people, including some children, were evacuated from the hotel.

“There were a number of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the hotel, which had around 15 rooms,” he said.

“I spoke to one young woman who seemed relatively calm.”

Photos and video taken by Mr Holloway, who lives opposite the hotel, showed the spread of the fire from an adjoining building to the roof of the Angel Inn.

West Sussex Fire and Rescue Services called the fire “significant”. Ten fire engines, an aerial ladder platform, water carrier and off-road vehicle responded to the incident.

Shortly after 6am the fire service said the incident had “escalated” and 14 fire engines were on the scene tackling the blaze.

“Over 30 people have been evacuated from the building and firefighters are working hard to bring the fire under control,” West Sussex Fire and Rescue Services said.

Speaking from the scene, Area Manager Richard Abbot advised commuters North Street would remain closed and asked the public to avoid the area.

“It is too early in the incident to know the cause of the fire, however we will be investigating as soon as it is safe to do so,” he said.

[*Sussex Police*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sussex-police) , which sent officers to the scene, warned road closures would be in place in the local area.

No casualties have been reported.

**Load-Date:** March 16, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Tens of thousands of Ukrainian refugees helped to access UK banking services*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67MC-C3F1-JBNF-W09Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 23, 2023 Thursday 10:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** MONEY; Version:1

**Length:** 380 words

**Byline:** Vicky Shaw

**Highlight:** More than 70,000 people have been helped to build their lives more easily by enabling them to receive their income, send money, and pay for goods.

**Body**

Tens of thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have been able to access banking services in the UK, according to the [*Treasury*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/treasury).

UK basic bank account providers were brought together, with action taken to remove barriers to opening UK bank accounts faced by Ukrainian nationals, such as the lack of a conventional ID.

This has helped more than 70,000 people to build their lives more easily in the UK by enabling them to receive their income, send money and pay for goods.

Basic bank accounts allow people with a limited credit history to access and carry out everyday banking.

We will continue to help as many ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** as possible access the banking services they need to build a life here

Economic Secretary to the Treasury Andrew Griffith

In general, basic bank accounts must be fee-free for standard use and do not have a borrowing facility, such as an overdraft, to help prevent people getting into unaffordable debt.

Economic Secretary to the Treasury Andrew Griffith said: “We will continue to help as many ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** as possible access the banking services they need to build a life here – and I’d like to thank UK banks and building societies for their support to date.

“A year on from the invasion, Putin should be left in no doubt that the West will not waver in its support for Ukraine and its people.”

Under the Payment Account Regulations 2015, the nine biggest personal current account (PCA) providers in the UK are legally required to offer basic bank accounts to customers who do not have a bank account or who are not eligible for a bank’s standard current account.

The nine institutions are Barclays, the [*Co-operative Bank*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/co-operative-bank) , HSBC UK, Lloyds Banking Group (which also includes Halifax and Bank of Scotland brands), Nationwide Building Society, NatWest Group (including RBS and [*Ulster Bank*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ulster-bank) brands), [*Santander UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/santander-uk) , TSB and Virgin Money.

A spokesperson for trade association [*UK Finance*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk-finance) said: “UK Finance and the industry is proud to have provided support to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and we will continue to do so.

“Last year we worked at pace with members and Government to make sure banking services were available to those fleeing the conflict and we are pleased so many could access an account which has proved vital to helping them settle, and in day-to-day life.”

**Load-Date:** February 23, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Paloma Faith says ‘we are all connected’ after meeting Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67N3-MFJ1-DY4H-K31K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 27, 2023 Monday 12:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 544 words

**Byline:** Connie Evans

**Highlight:** The singer travelled to Warsaw to meet refugees a year on from the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

**Body**

[*Paloma Faith*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/paloma-faith) has said “we are all connected” after witnessing a “human chain of kindness” during a visit to meet ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Poland.

The 41-year-old singer visited projects supporting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and funded by donations from the British public through the Disasters Emergency Committee’s (DEC) Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal.

To mark one year since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, [*Faith*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/faith) travelled to the Polish capital [*Warsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warsaw) to see how donations to the DEC Ukraine appeal have been put to use.

Of the experience, Faith said: “Visiting these projects, I was really touched by how such a heart-breaking humanitarian situation has activated a human chain of kindness across borders.

“From the British public donating to the appeal, to local people in Poland using those funds to support refugees, to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** volunteering to help fellow refugees, to children helping their mothers cope in the absence of fathers and extended families.

“I only hope this level of kindness will continue and be extended to other refugees facing the same issues across the globe, be it conflict or environmental disasters.

“After all, we are all connected.”

Faith performed during the Concert for Ukraine in Birmingham last year alongside the likes of Ed Sheeran and Camila Cabello.

The event, which was also broadcast on ITV, ultimately raised more than £13.4 million for the humanitarian effort in the war-torn nation.

During a three-day visit to Warsaw in February, Faith visited a number of different DEC-funded projects, including a refugee centre supporting mothers who had been forced to flee Ukraine with their children, and a Ukrainian school set up for refugee children where they are able to learn in their native language.

Reflecting on meeting women who had been forced to flee Ukraine – some with young children and others who were pregnant – Faith said: “It was so moving speaking to young mothers who have fled Ukraine.

“They had all made the difficult journey to Poland alone with their children, some of them crossing the border while they were pregnant.

“I met one woman, Emma, with a tiny baby and two other children and I could remember that feeling of trying to cope, trying to juggle everything.

“As a mother, all you want is for your children to be okay, to be happy and safe above all else – and you feel the pressure to make the best choices for them.

“Those women have had to make choices that no-one should ever have to.”

Faith is among a number of high-profile individuals to have travelled to Ukraine and Poland to meet with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** since the outbreak of the conflict in February last year.

In June 2022, American actor and producer [*Ben Stiller*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ben-stiller) visited Ukraine, where he met with President [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) and Ukrainian citizens as part of his role as a goodwill ambassador for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Oscar-winning American actor Sean Penn also spent time with Ukrainian people and President Zelensky during a trip to Ukraine to create a documentary about the ongoing Russian invasion.

Faith added: “Many families came to Poland expecting to be here only for a short period, but one year on from the start of the conflict, people are struggling with the reality of living in limbo for such a long time.”

**Load-Date:** February 26, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Huge fire engulfs 400-year-old hotel ‘housing Ukrainian refugees’*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67SS-XV51-DY4H-K2YF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 16, 2023 Thursday 10:28 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 347 words

**Byline:** Alana Calvert

**Highlight:** The fire was thought to have broken out shortly after 1am before spreading to the roof of a pub

**Body**

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“Over 30 people have been evacuated from the building and firefighters are working hard to bring the fire under control,” West Sussex Fire and Rescue Services said.

Speaking from the scene, Area Manager Richard Abbot advised commuters North Street would remain closed and asked the public to avoid the area.

“It is too early in the incident to know the cause of the fire, however we will be investigating as soon as it is safe to do so,” he said.

[*Sussex Police*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sussex-police) , which sent officers to the scene, warned road closures would be in place in the local area.

No casualties have been reported.

A spokesman for South East Coast Ambulance Service said that four people were treated at the scene but did not require hospital treatment.

He said: “I can confirm ambulance crews, including our Hazardous Area Response Team (HART) attended the scene alongside fellow emergency services.

“Four people were treated and all were discharged at the scene. While the majority of our resources have left the scene, a small number remain to support the fire service.”

**Load-Date:** March 16, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Headteacher who helped young Ukrainian refugees to be honoured at Windsor Castle*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69G2-H341-DY4H-K02C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

October 23, 2023 Monday 11:22 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 365 words

**Byline:** Jamel Smith

**Highlight:** Inna Hryhorovych helped mould St Mary’s as a school that could provide education and a caring environment to displaced Ukrainian children.

**Body**

The headteacher of a school which assisted young ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and the hatmaker to the late Queen are set to be honoured at [*Windsor Castle*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/windsor-castle).

Inna Hryhorovych, headteacher of St Mary’s Ukrainian School in [*Holland Park*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/holland-park) , will be made an [*MBE*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mbe) for her services to education and to the Ukrainian community in the UK.

The Ukrainian headteacher, who was named on this year’s King’s Birthday Honours list, helped mould St Mary’s as a school that could provide education and a caring environment to displaced Ukrainian children.

The school has experienced a significant increase in the number of enrolled pupils, rising from 226 to 934 since the start of the Ukrainian war in 2022, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea said.

If we could ask for British families for one more push with housing, opening their doors to Ukrainians, we do hope this war should have its end. We do hope it should be soon

Inna Hryhorovych, head of St Mary’s Ukrainian School

St Mary’s employs 137 staff, 87% of whom were displaced from Ukraine during the war.

Ms Hryhorovych told the council that she “cried” when she learned of the honour.

She said: “My parents were here when the MBE letter arrived and they were really proud – but not all the children here today have the luxury of having parents around them, and we build them for the future. That’s the biggest reward I could wish for.

“We’re so grateful to the kindness of British people who have hosted Ukrainians. If we could ask for British families for one more push with housing, opening their doors to Ukrainians, we do hope this war should have its end. We do hope it should be soon.”

Stella McLaren will receive the Royal Victorian Medal for her milliner service to the late Queen Elizabeth.

MP Sir [*Benjamin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ben) Bradshaw and vaccination scientist Dr Parvinder Aley will also receive honours at Tuesday’s investiture.

Dr Aley, director of global operations for the Oxford Vaccine Group, will be made an OBE for services to vaccination during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Sir Ben, who served in both Sir [*Tony Blair*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tony-blair) and Gordon Brown’s governments and was only the second MP to be openly gay when elected in 1997, is receiving a knighthood for political and public service.

**Load-Date:** October 23, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Bank apologises after mortgage refused over Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6863-6SM1-JBNF-W0M5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 8, 2023 Monday 10:32 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 337 words

**Byline:** Emily Atkinson

**Highlight:** The lender said there was a risk he could rent out the space for commercial gain in the future

**Body**

[*A bank*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/halifax) has issued an apology after rejecting a homeowner’s mortgage application due to them hosting two ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees).

A mother and her young daughter have been staying in an annexe at Dominik Zaum’s family home since June 2022.

Fixed-rate mortgage deals leapt up in the wake of last autumn’s disastrous mini-budget, with many predicting they will continue to edge up even further as the Bank of England looks set to hike interest rates.

When his mortgage came up for renewal, Mr Zaum, like many others, begun shopping around for a new deal – and eventually applied for one with Halifax, he told BBC Radio 4’s Money Box programme.

But Halifax refused due to a risk he could rent out the space for commercial gain in the future, Mr Zaum told the broadcaster.

He said: “When we contacted Halifax through our broker they said they could not provide us with a mortgage because we were providing accommodation to a Ukrainian family and therefore there was a significant risk that we would rent out the room commercially in the future.”

Mr Zaum was taking part in the Homes for Ukraine scheme, which allow Ukrainians and their immediate family members with no family ties to the UK to be sponsored by individuals or organisations who can offer them a home.

Halifax has since apologised for its refusal.

In a statement, a Halifax spokesperson said: “We are very supportive of the Homes for Ukraine scheme and would never decline a mortgage application on that basis.

“We reviewed the case, apologised to the customer that this hadn’t been made clear to us during the original application and issued a mortgage offer on 25 April.”

Mr Zaum said that he was worried that Halifax’s refusal could reflect similar behaviour by the rest of the lending sector.

“We have since secured a mortgage with another bank so, fortunately, it has not had any impact on our finances,” he told Money Box.

He added: “Had we not been able to secure a new mortgage we would have moved from a fixed-term mortgage to a higher rate and cost us over £9,000 a year.”

**Load-Date:** May 8, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees celebrate Purim in Berlin as war drags on*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67PX-H0S1-DY4H-K1R0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2023 Tuesday 7:15 PM GMT

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**Length:** 377 words

**Byline:** Kirsten Grieshaber

**Highlight:** Hundreds of refugees from Ukraine have celebrated the Jewish holiday of Purim in Berlin dressed in colorful costumes and dancing to loud Israeli music

**Body**

Hundreds of refugees from Ukraine celebrated the [*Jewish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jewish) holiday of Purim in [*Berlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/berlin) Tuesday dressed in colorful costumes and dancing to loud [*Israeli*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/israeli) music.

They danced, drank and ate together with hundreds of other members of the German capital's Chabad community that organized the party in a hotel. Many of the ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** at the Purim party were students and young children, among them dozens of orphans who fled from Odesa a year ago.

“A year ago these kids were sitting in the bunkers, rockets falling on them,” said Yehuda Teichtal, a Berlin rabbi and head of the local Chabad community who had helped their escape from the war in Ukraine.

“Now they've found a new home, are studying German, learn new skills, and also learn how to help themselves,” he added.

Teichtal, wearing huge orange sunglasses and a glittery silver cap, danced with some of the refugee children in circles as Israeli singer Ishay Lapidot performed popular Purim songs on stage.

The holiday of Purim marks the victory of Jews over a tyrant in ancient Persia and is traditionally celebrated with costumes and parties.

[*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) has given shelter to more than 1 million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** since their country was attacked by Russia over a year ago. Among them were thousands of Jews including several Holocaust survivors.

Around 80 Jewish Ukrainians who were taken in by the Chabad community recently returned to their hometown of Odesa, but hundreds of others remain in Berlin.

Among them are Gabriel Hrykoriev and Elisheva Tkachenko, a young married couple who fled to Berlin a year ago. They finished university in Odesa before the war started and decided to stay in Berlin to finish their German language degrees and then look for jobs.

Still, even as they joined the Purim party, the war in Ukraine was always on their mind.

“We are talking to our parents on the phone every day,” said Tkachenko, whose family is from Kherson and whose parents decided to stay in Ukraine despite the war.

“Actually, I'm a bit sad today because I have to think of all the happy Purim celebrations when I was a child," she added with a sad smile. “Back then our families were having so much fun together and there was no war.”

\_\_\_ Follow AP’s coverage of the war at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Baftas 2022: Andy Serkis hits out at Priti Patel over Ukraine refugee crisis during his speech*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650G-TC31-DY4H-K0HT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 6:29 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,FILM,CULTURE; Version:1

**Length:** 675 words

**Byline:** Peony Hirwani

**Highlight:** Serkis pokes fun at Patel by saying her debut film was called 'Hostile Environment'

**Body**

[*Andy Serkis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/andy-serkis) has slammed [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) during his [*Baftas*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/baftas) speech for her response and handling of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) 's ongoing refugee crisis.

The 57-year-old actor and director, well known for playing Gollum in The Lord Of The Rings, poked fun at the UK home secretary a week after her office revealed [*only 300 visas had been issued*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugees-poland-uk-visa-home-office-b2031118.html) out of a total of 17,700 family scheme applications for [***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) ***refugees*** to come to the UK.

The crisis had earlier been labelled [*Europe's worst since the Second World War*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugee-numbers-crisis-latest-b2029605.html).

"A world-class director is a visionary empowered to change the world with a story that they are burning to tell," Serkis said while introducing the award for best director.

"Bringing together and leading a huge family of supremely talented strangers on a difficult and chaotic journey, whilst hopefully creating an atmosphere that inspires inclusivity and values every single member of that family equally," he added.

"So it is no surprise that Priti Patel on her debut feature 'Hostile Environment' found enormous problems," the filmmaker quipped.

"And that her follow-up movie 'All refugees are welcome but some are more welcome than others' is a complete nightmare."

Andy Serkis shading Priti Patel about refugees [*#EEBAFTAs*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/EEBAFTAs?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#BAFTAs*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/BAFTAs?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/35saW72Ky5*](https://t.co/35saW72Ky5) - Emi Eleode (@EmiEleode) [*March 13, 2022*](https://twitter.com/EmiEleode/status/1503109005954195466?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Fans applauded The Batman actor for "calling out" Patel, soon after he made the comments on the UK politician."Kudos to Andy Serkis for giving the dig to Priti Patel in his Baftas intro," wrote one person on social media. "Never let these f\*\*\*\*\*\* sleep."Haha this was the perfect reation to that Andy Serkis condemnation of Priti Patel by Stephen Graham [*pic.twitter.com/Yu4ElPXQ1v*](https://t.co/Yu4ElPXQ1v) - Catherine (@kazzie89) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/kazzie89/status/1503171850364465157?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Another person added: "Andy Serkis coming in with the shade towards Priti Patel, things you love to see."andy serkis called out priti patel very skillfully there. love u andy [*#BAFTA2022*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/BAFTA2022?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) - han (@ithanbi) [*March 13, 2022*](https://twitter.com/ithanbi/status/1503107990441897991?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Andy Serkis taking aim at Priti Patel about refugees being welcomed into the UK.King shit. DRAG HER. [*#EEBaftas*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/EEBAFTAs?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) - Darryl Griffiths (@LegallyBOD) [*March 13, 2022*](https://twitter.com/LegallyBOD/status/1503108422639796226?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) "I am so here for Andy Serkis calling out Priti Patel," wrote another person.woooo! Andy Serkis dig on Priti Patel! yesss [*#BAFTAs*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/BAFTAs?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) - Babs ⌛ (@BabsSheKing) [*March 13, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BabsSheKing/status/1503107898515374080?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Serkis also reflected on [*the Russian invasion*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-putin-latest-zelensky-b2035062.html) of Ukraine while on the red carpet.

He told the PA news agency that it's "important" to celebrate the arts as they hold "humanity together".

"It's a difficult situation having a celebration like this when such horrendous, horrific things are happening not too far away from here," he told the PA news agency.

"But I think it's also important that arts are celebrated because arts do hold humanity together, and actual freedom of speech and the power of storytelling is something that I think Ukrainians would totally applaud."

So if we hold them up tonight and reflect the enjoyment and the passion back to them, I don't think it's a bad thing."

On Sunday (13 March), UK prime minister [*Boris Johnson was urged to sack Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/boris-johnson-priti-patel-sack-ukraine-refugees-b2034841.html) over her department's handling of the Ukrainian refugee crisis.

Liberal Democrat leader Sir Ed Davey said Patel's response to the "humanitarian catastrophe" had been "utterly shameful".

Additional reporting by PA

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) .

To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Sports bodies asked to help accommodate Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6626-7G41-JBNF-W2S8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 31, 2022 Sunday 3:52 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 460 words

**Byline:** David Young

**Highlight:** The Irish state has run out of accommodation for the tens of the thousands of refugees who have entered the country since the war began in Ukraine.

**Body**

The [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) Government has approached the country’s main sporting bodies to seek further help accommodating the recent influx of refugees to Ireland.

Last week about 100 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** were temporarily housed at the Aviva Stadium in [*Dublin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dublin) , as the state struggles to find enough emergency beds for those fleeing the war.

It is understood the refugees were put up on camp beds at the stadium for one week.

The department with oversight for sport has now confirmed that all the main organisations in Ireland have been contacted about similar short-term accommodation options.

A spokeswoman for the Department of Tourism, Culture, [*Arts*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/arts) , Gaeltacht, [*Sport*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sport) and Media said: “The department made contact with the FAI, GAA, IRFU and Sport Ireland to seek their assistance, on behalf of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), in providing emergency short-term accommodation for people seeking humanitarian shelter in Ireland.

“The organisations responded positively to the request and any accommodation offers arising were the subject of direct engagement by DCEDIY with the sports organisations.”

There are currently no plans for the arrangement at the Aviva to be extended, but it is believed similar arena-style sporting facilities will be considered for emergency shelter use in the coming months.

It emerged earlier this month that Ireland had run out of state accommodation for arriving ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** – resulting in Ukrainians being temporarily housed in tents at the Gormanston military camp in Co Meath.

Sixty refugees were housed at the army camp last week.

The old [*Dublin Airport*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dublin-airport) terminal was also being used for emergency accommodation, but that ceased last Thursday.

To date, Ireland has taken in more than 40,000 refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine – the majority of them are women and children.

At present some 32,000 people are being accommodated, the majority of them in serviced accommodation such as hotels, B&Bs and guesthouses.

Every day about 130 more ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arrive in the country.

Over the summer, the Government used 5,000 student accommodation beds to put up some of the refugees.

But over the coming weeks the number of these beds will reduce as students return to use them for the coming academic year.

Religious buildings, modular homes and vacant properties are some of the other accommodation options being considered by the Government.

Repurposing some vacant buildings for long-term use as homes for refugees is under way but it is understood it is proving to be a slow process.

Another issue which is proving to be problematic is finding people to run facilities and provide all the support needed – such as catering, maintenance, security and wellbeing provision for long-term residents.

**Load-Date:** July 31, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Public support for Ukrainian refugees already waning in UK, poll shows*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65WP-6F91-JBNF-W263-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 10, 2022 Sunday 7:32 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 634 words

**Byline:** Lizzie Dearden

**Highlight:** Exclusive: Public still more likely to support ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** compared to Afghans and Syrians

**Body**

Public support for ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) is already waning in Britain, polling suggests as the war continues to rage.

Polling by YouGov shows that in March, three quarters of people supported resettling Ukrainians in the UK and 42 per cent thought the figure should be in the tens of thousands “at least”.

But the figures have now dropped to 71 per cent of people supporting resettlement, with 29 per cent wanting to see tens of thousands of refugees welcomed.

There is no resettlement scheme for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, with the government instead offering three-year visas that do not amount to a grant of asylum, to people who have relatives in the UK or are sponsored by volunteers.

So far, there have been 175,100 applications to the scheme, 148,300 of which have been granted, and 91,000 [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) visa holders have arrived in the UK.

Ministers set up a bespoke Afghan resettlement process following the Taliban takeover last year, but YouGov’s polling shows that only half the public support it.

The scheme, which started in January, has been applied to some of the 15,000 people who were already in the UK after being evacuated from Afghanistan.

Although the figures have fallen, the research indicates that British people are more supportive of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** than those from other nations.

YouGov said its research suggested that the “British public feel less generous and more morally conflicted about refugees from Afghanistan, [*Syria*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/syria) and Somalia, compared to Ukraine, with Conservative voters particularly likely to take a harder stance on refugees from these countries”.

When asked the same question for each nationality, 71 per cent of people said they would support resettling ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, half said they would support resettling Afghan refugees, 48 per cent said they would support resettling Syrians and 40 per cent would support the same for Somalian refugees.

The figures are particularly stark for Conservative voters. While almost three quarters welcomed ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, only 37 per cent said the same for Afghans, under a third for Syrians and a fifth for Somalis.

Tory supporters were also more likely to see Afghan, Syrian and Somali refugees as “a threat” than Labour supporters or the public at large, although just 5 per cent thought the same for Ukrainians.

Conservatives were also less likely to believe the UK has a “moral obligation” to offer asylum.

The Reset Communities and Refugees charity said it was still receiving a “high level of interest” from people offering to accommodate Ukrainians in their homes.

But chief executive Kate Brown added: “We know levels of interest change according to the news agenda and cost of living pressures, and that compassion fatigue can also set in.

“Even so, we are continuing to see high levels of interest from people in hosting Ukrainian people in their own homes, having trained more than 3,000 sponsors under our Homes for Ukraine matching service.

“At the same time, we have had record numbers of applications from volunteer community sponsorship groups coming together to welcome refugees from a range of countries.”

Tim Naor Hilton, the chief executive of Refugee Action, said: “The only thing that should matter in our refugee protection policy is a person’s need for protection. There is no wrong type of refugee.

“We believe that the public has huge compassion for those seeking safety. However, it is the government that has sought to stoke up divisions by pitting one group of refugees against another, setting up bespoke resettlement schemes for some while creating an ugly deportation plan to Rwanda for others.

“What we need is a refugee protection system that is built on compassion for all those that need it.”

YouGov carried out its polling between 19 and 25 May and weighted the results.

**Load-Date:** July 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Sunak hosts coronation lunch for volunteers and Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:685T-G5F1-JBNF-W4CF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 6, 2023 Saturday 11:01 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 361 words

**Byline:** Sophie Wingate

**Highlight:** They will dine on food sourced from across the UK, including Scottish salmon and Northern Irish soda bread.

**Body**

The [*Prime Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prime-minister) and his wife will welcome volunteers, ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the UK, and youth groups to Downing Street for a lunch to mark the coronation.

[*Rishi Sunak*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rishi-sunak) and Akshata Murty will host the event on Sunday as part of the Big Lunch celebrations taking place across the country over the coronation weekend.

They will dine on food sourced from across the UK, including beef from Gloucestershire, [*Scottish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scottish) Loch Duart salmon, Northern Irish soda bread, and ice cream from Wales, according to No 10.

I am proud to welcome Ukrainians forced to flee their homes and some incredible community heroes to Downing Street for our very own Coronation lunch

Rishi Sunak

Crockery will be donated by Emma Bridgewater, a pottery with strong royal connections, including a limited edition King [*Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/charles-iii) teapot.

Like thousands of other street parties, Downing Street will be adorned with festive bunting.

Recipients of the Points of Light Award, given to ordinary people doing extraordinary things for their community, have been invited.

They include a couple who founded a charity supporting people who have gone through baby loss, Zoe and Andy Clark-Coates, breast cancer campaigner Laura Ashurst, and Navjot Sawhney, who designed a hand-cranked washing machine used by thousands of people with no access to electric ones.

Ukrainians who have come to the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme after [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) invaded their country, as well as their UK sponsors, will also attend.

Invitees also include young people from UK Youth and the National Association of Boys and Girls Clubs.

Mr Sunak said: “Come rain or shine, thousands of friends and neighbours are coming together this weekend to put up the bunting, pour the tea and cut the cake at street parties and community events across the UK.

“I am proud to welcome Ukrainians forced to flee their homes and some incredible community heroes to Downing Street for our very own coronation lunch to celebrate this historic moment.

“In England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland – and across our Overseas Territories and the wider Commonwealth – people are marking this momentous occasion in the spirit of unity and hope for the future”.

**Load-Date:** May 6, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Ship hosting Ukrainian refugees has contract extended by five months*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:670N-8J91-JBNF-W3V6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

December 2, 2022 Friday 7:25 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 570 words

**Byline:** Lauren Gilmour

**Highlight:** The Scottish Government confirmed more than 1,200 displaced people from Ukraine will remain on the MS Victoria until June 2023.

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** will spend a further five months on a ship which has been accommodating them since June this year, the [*Scottish Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scottish-government) have confirmed.

The MS [*Victoria*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/victoria) , which is docked in Leith, [*Edinburgh*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/edinburgh) , will continue to provide “safe accommodation for displaced people” until June 2023 with the option to extend.

Scottish Liberal Democrat leader Alex Cole-Hamilton, however, accused the Scottish [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) of “quietly” extending the contract, according to reports by LBC on Friday.

On Friday evening, Mr Cole-Hamilton told the PA news agency: “This isn’t a new life, it’s a new limbo. ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** deserve a long-term solution.

“I spoke to aid workers, working in Lviv, connecting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing to [*Scotland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scotland) with homes and routes out of Ukraine, who have described the Scottish Government as being humiliatingly underprepared.

“They wanted the kudos of throwing open their doors but they did none of the groundwork.

“I don’t think when these Ukrainians are fleeing unimaginable atrocities at the hands of the Russians, I don’t think they dreamed about a very crowded passenger ship.”

Appropriate long-term accommodation is yet to be identified.

Minister with Special Responsibility for Refugees from Ukraine Neil Gray said: “We do not want people to spend any longer than is absolutely necessary in temporary welcome accommodation, however, we know from speaking to those on board the MS Victoria that it is a safe environment that has built a powerful sense of community.

“We’ve extended the contract with the MS Victoria to continue to safely accommodate arrivals from Ukraine. Work continues to match people in temporary accommodation with hosts and matching teams are operating on board both ships.

“Across Scotland work is under way to increase the availability of suitable and sustainable longer-term accommodation. The Scottish Government continues to work closely with local authority partners to increase longer-term housing opportunities for displaced people across Scotland.

“We’ve provided up to £50 million of funding for local authorities and registered social landlords to bring void properties back into use and increase the available housing supply.

“This includes the recent allocation of more than £6 million from the Ukraine Longer Term Resettlement Fund to Aberdeen City Council to bring around 500 void properties back into use.”

The Scottish Government has urged members of the public to volunteer as hosts for refugees from Ukraine currently in short-term accommodation.

Mr Gray added: “We would encourage anyone considering becoming a host to come forward and provide a warm welcome. In recognition of this commitment, hosts can receive thank you payments for up to 12 months.

“I’m extremely grateful to people who are already hosting, as well as those who have already put their details forward and are still waiting to be matched.

“I’m proud of the warm welcome the people of Scotland have given to those fleeing the war and the support we are providing to so many thousands of people.”

More than 21,500 people with a Scottish sponsor have arrived in the country since the Russian invasion of Ukraine earlier this year, representing 20% of all UK arrivals.

The ship is currently accommodating around 1,275 refugees including families and children.

All options are being explored with the MS Ambition which is currently docked in Glasgow and has been chartered until February 2023.

**Load-Date:** December 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*ROAD TO RICHES; A Swiss monastery in mega-wealthy Zug is playing host to 160 Ukrainian refugees. Paddy Dowling hears their stories*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:697N-YN61-JCS0-D2JY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

September 24, 2023 Sunday

Second Edition

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**Section:** THE NEW REVIEW; Pg. 28

**Length:** 694 words

**Byline:** PADDY DOWLING

**Body**

Zug, Switzerland's wealthiest canton, is famous for its flawless alpine vistas and low taxes. And here in the rolling hills sits Kloster Menzingen monastery, a temporary home to 160 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have fled their war-torn country.

"They were bombing my city last night," explains law graduate Hana, 28, from Odesa, as she walks along the gloomy corridor in the southern wing of the convent.

"This is our life, waking up to news that our towns and cities are once more under siege," she says.

The exclusive and perfectly manicured district, where one in eight of its residents is a millionaire, was by the end of July host to 2,333 refugees and asylum seekers from 55 different nationalities including 828 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Ukrainians in Switzerland have been granted asylum provisionally, to stay and work, under a fast-tracked permit 'S' status, reserved for people in need of special protection. However, when the war ends, they must return.

Notwithstanding, all residents at Kloster Menzingen will be uprooted once more to a repurposed modular facility, 12km away, which will provide shelter for up to 400 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

The wing at the monastery, which has been their spiritual sanctuary for more than a year, is closing for renovation and conversion into apartments.

Christian Murbach, at the Zug Cantonal Social Welfare Office, explains: "Renewing leases on existing facilities, or finding and or building new asylum accommodation in a tense housing market, is becoming increasingly difficult".

Living in Switzerland's Disneyland for the rich is expensive, even for those earning reasonable salaries. At the monastery, Ukrainians each receive around £175 social welfare per month - in addition to core expenses provided by the canton - explained they simply couldn't afford to buy anything.

Tatiana, who arrived in Switzerland from Odesa eight months pregnant, explains she could never have afforded the 'five-star' Swiss medical treatment she received when she gave birth to baby Viktoria. "The canton has been so kind and welcoming with all the children," she adds.

Menzingen monastery allocated a playroom solely for children, brightly decorated with six-foot-high cartoon murals.

And for those unaccompanied minors arriving into the canton from Afghanistan, they have been provided with a 30-bed alpine lodge on Mount Zugerberg, equipped with an open plan kitchen, gymnasium, games room and bedrooms, all with breathtaking views towards the snow-capped mountains of the Swiss Alps.

This is a stark contrast to the UK, where government ministers ordered the removal of child-friendly images in asylum centres for those children arriving unaccompanied, because they were "too welcoming".

Most governments across Europe, reeling after Covid, were caught off guard by the Ukrainian refugee crisis and the speed at which the 7.1 million people (UNHCR) spilled across porous borders.

And, despite being immensely well-heeled, cantons like Zug were no better prepared. They were challenged; logistically by a shortage of accommodation, and beneath the polished veneer of pleasantries in society, a very steep decline in public sympathy toward all refugees.

As the conflict drags on, well into its second year - even Murbach concedes "we are at a tipping point now with regards to support for the Ukraine crisis, and it's even worse for Afghanis and Syrians, for example".

This explains why; to plan, consult and build new asylum premises replacing existing ones like Steinhausen in Zug, where "non-***Ukrainian***" ***refugees*** still live six-to-a-room, can take six years.

With the global migrant crisis already having a profound impact on the European continent, and the next big flow an inevitability, regions like Zug are perhaps concerned - "if they build it, they [refugees] will come".

Hanna, from Odesa, was forced against her will by her family to leave her old life in Ukraine where she had everything and asked for nothing concludes: "I honestly don't know how I feel about anything anymore. I sit on my bed here shaking my head in disbelief thinking, I used to sit on my own bed watching Netflix in my own apartment, and in my own country. And now I am a refugee."

**Load-Date:** September 25, 2023

**End of Document**



[*'No cap on Ukrainian refugees arriving' despite accommodation challenges*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:658M-W4J1-DY4H-K0G7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 21, 2022 Thursday 1:37 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 603 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** Around 25,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have arrived in the Republic of Ireland since the war began.

**Body**

[*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) will not cap the number of refugees it accepts even as the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) admits it is facing a struggle to house arriving Ukrainians, the Irish Justice Minister said.

Around 25,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have arrived in the [*Republic of Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/republic-ireland) since the war began at the end of February.

While numbers arriving have fallen in recent days, the Government expects it to rise again in the coming weeks.

Helen McEntee, speaking in Government Buildings on Thursday, insisted that ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** will continue to be welcomed.

She indicated the Government will avoid, if possible, forcing people or businesses to give up property or open their homes to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

The Millstreet Arena in Co Cork is being used to house at least 70 refugees, with the expectation that mass or emergency forms of accommodation will play a more central role in Irish efforts to welcome Ukrainians.

"Obviously we want to make sure that we don't find ourselves in a situation where we don't have space and accommodation, because we've been very clear we're not going to turn people away. We're not going to put a cap on the number of people," Ms McEntee said.

She said "every option" is being explored.

"We want to encourage people to come forwards, not to force anybody to have to give up their property or accommodation."

Ms McEntee said she would back plans to financially help households taking in ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

"There are people who are looking for it, there are others who aren't, but I think obviously if we get to a situation where we want to encourage more people to offer up accommodation, that might be an option.

"We're very aware that there's an increase in costs in electricity and fuel, even in food prices.

"So I think what we'd have to establish is how we would cover those costs.

"I don't think anybody's looking to make money out of this."

Roderic O'Gorman, whose department is leading efforts to house refugees fleeing the war-torn country, earlier admitted that mass accommodation would increasingly be used in response to the crisis.

Mr O'Gorman said such accommodation is "not the preference" but he expects refugees to be there for a "number of weeks".

He added: "It's not the gold standard, it's not what we would like to see everybody living in, but we are in a crisis situation. We're in a European-wide war, and we are doing our very best to provide shelter and provide safety to Ukrainians."

He indicated the limit had been reached on the use of hotel accommodation as the busy summer tourist season approaches.

The Department of Integration, he said, is trying to find other accommodation.

He told [*RTE*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rte) radio the Government is speaking to universities and colleges.

"[*Accommodation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/accommodation) like Millstreet, that kind of grouped accommodation, is going to become a larger feature of how we provide for people," the minister said.

"We have to be upfront about that. It's what's been used in many European countries from very early on in this crisis."

Mr O'Gorman said he is aware of calls from various organisations for a national director to co-ordinate the country's response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis.

However, he did not say whether such a proposal is being considered.

Ms McEntee played down any suggestion a national director or even a specific minister could be appointed to co-ordinate the response.

Also speaking on RTE radio, the Ukrainian ambassador to Ireland admitted she has concerns about the use of emergency accommodation.

Larysa Gerasko said: "It's not the best accommodation, even temporarily, but I fully understand that Ireland is facing a challenge, a housing challenge.

"Also, Ireland is a small country."

**Load-Date:** April 21, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Andy Serkis uses Bafta speech to condemn Priti Patel over Ukraine refugee crisis*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650F-NY01-JBNF-W180-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 13, 2022 Sunday 11:06 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 419 words

**Byline:** Lottie Kilraine

**Highlight:** The British actor and director poked fun at the politician, saying her debut film would be called 'Hostile Environment'.

**Body**

[*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) actor and director [*Andy Serkis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/andy-serkis) took a swipe at Home Secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) at the Bafta awards ceremony over the [***Ukraine***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ***refugee crisis***.

The 57-year-old actor, known for playing Gollum in The Lord Of The Rings, poked fun at the politician, saying her debut film would be called "hostile environment".

Whilst introducing the award for the best director, Serkis said: "A world-class director is a visionary empowered to change the world with a story that they are burning to tell.

"Bringing together and leading a huge family of supremely talented strangers on a difficult and chaotic journey, whilst hopefully creating an atmosphere that inspires inclusivity and values every single member of that family equally.

"So it is no surprise that Priti Patel on her debut feature 'Hostile Environment' found enormous problems.

"And that her follow-up movie 'All refugees are welcome but some are more welcome than others' is a complete nightmare."

It is no surprise that Priti Patel on her debut feature 'Hostile Environment' found enormous problems. And that her follow up movie 'All refugees are welcome but some are more welcome than others' is a complete nightmare.

Andy Serkis

Reflecting on the Russian invasion of Ukraine while on the red carpet, Serkis said it is "important" to celebrate the arts as it holds "humanity together".

"It's a difficult situation having a celebration like this when such horrendous, horrific things are happening not too far away from here," he told the PA news agency.

"But I think it's also important that arts are celebrated because arts do hold humanity together, and actually freedom of speech and the power of storytelling is something that I think Ukrainians would totally applaud.

"So if we hold them up tonight and reflect the enjoyment and the passion back to them, I don't think it's a bad thing."

Serkis was not the only one to mention the ongoing conflict during the award ceremony with host Rebel Wilson taking a swipe at the Russian President Vladimir Putin.

As she introduced the performance by Coda star Emilia Jones to Joni Mitchell's ballad Both Sides Now, Wilson explained that the actress would be accompanied by two sign language interpreters who signed the song in both British Sign Language and American Sign Language.

She added that "luckily though in all sign languages, this is the gesture for Putin" as she gave the middle finger to the Russian leader.

The actress also paid tribute to the people of Ukraine after the In Memory Of segment of the award ceremony.

**Load-Date:** March 13, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees complete hospitality training course*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66W6-KBR1-DY4H-K2B3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

November 16, 2022 Wednesday 12:48 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 398 words

**Byline:** Emma Lawson

**Highlight:** The Learning for Life programme is run by drinks company Diageo.

**Body**

A group of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have graduated from a training course in [*Scotland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scotland).

Seven refugees and seven other students completed the Learning for Life hospitality programme run by drinks company [*Diageo*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/diageo).

The students spent six weeks training at the Learning for Life Academy in [*Edinburgh*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/edinburgh) , which included work experience at bars and hotels and a week with a local employer.

As part of their experience, the students also completed the Johnnie Walker Journey of Flavour tour and visited Glenkinchie Distillery.

The Learning for Life programme, which is delivered in partnership with charities [*Springboard*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/springboard) and the Princes Trust, aims to drive recruitment in the hospitality sector and support the long-term prosperity of the industry.

Hanna Korneiko, a Ukrainian refugee who moved to Scotland in August, joined the course in the hope that it would provide access to employment.

She said: “Back home in Ukraine, I had an established career and a business with my husband, which we ran together.

“When the war began, my husband and I decided that my son and I should leave the country and so I found myself in Scotland, starting from the very beginning.

“When I arrived, I only knew about 10 words in [*English*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/english). I was very afraid that this was going to hold me back from finding work.

“I was lucky to be introduced to Learning for Life, which has given me so much confidence in my abilities.

“The team have shown me that nothing is impossible and, after six weeks, I have been offered a job to work at Apex Hotels and my ambition now is to become a hotel manager.”

Ms Korneiko is one of eight graduates to have already secured jobs with employers such as Signatures Pubs, Apex Hotels, IHG The Kimpton and The George Hotel.

Gillian Dalziel, Learning for Life programme manager for Diageo in the UK, said: “At Diageo, we are committed to creating a positive impact within our communities. Learning for Life plays an important role, allowing us to champion diversity and inclusion, not only in our business, but across the industry.

“Since the onset of the war in Ukraine, so many people have had to uproot their life and give up careers that they have worked so hard to develop.

“It has been a real honour to support the participants on this course to develop new skills and build relationships in the Scottish hospitality sector, which has so much to offer those looking for an exciting and rewarding career.”

**Load-Date:** November 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees targeted by 'sophisticated' visa scam*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69YH-DC61-F072-44VD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

December 26, 2023 Tuesday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 4

**Length:** 1227 words

**Byline:** ANDY GREGORY

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are arriving at UK airports with fake visas and false promises of a Homes for Ukraine sponsor family after being targeted by "extremely sophisticated" scams, charities have warned.

Charities told The Independent that they are dealing with increasing numbers of cases in which Ukrainians have been tricked into paying hundreds of pounds for letters giving them "permission to travel" to the UK and fake British visas, by criminals taking advantage of their desperation to leave.

The visas are impossible to identify as fraudulent by sight, meaning that Ukrainians are permitted to travel by airline staff, only to be told by Border Force that their documents are not valid, according to the charity Settled, which says it is now dealing with between one and five such cases each week. The Home Office said it is working continuously to identify and prevent this type of fraud, which it blamed on organised crime groups.

While some of these fraud victims have landed in a "nightmare limbo" after being classed as illegal migrants and having their passports seized at UK airports, the charity welcomed the fact that Border Force officials now increasingly appear to be granting six-month visas to Ukrainian fraud victims instead.

But the charity is concerned that, despite being granted these discretionary six-month visa stamps, some of the victims are still being left without access to housing and benefits - because councils and Job Centre staff are failing to recognise them as legitimate.

Mariia, whose hometown in eastern Ukraine is occupied by Russian forces, told Settled she was sent a supposed UK visa and information about her British sponsors after paying around £300 for help with arranging to come to the UK.

"I was sure that[my sponsors]werewaiting for me in England," she said. "But when I arrived at Stansted airport, I discovered that my letter from theHomeOffice was a fake. The officer stamped my passport with a temporary visa, and told me to go to the local authority where it said my 'sponsor' lived.When the councilsaid that such a sponsor was not registered with them, I almost fainted. What to do? I had nowhere else to go."

Mariia was put in a temporary shelter by the Red Cross, which provided her with £30 a week to live on while she struggled for four months to obtain a biometric residence permit. This meant she was unable to work, study, apply for benefits or see a doctor until she eventually received help from Settled.

After first noticing the issue in June, Settled wrote to the Home Office warning that criminals are taking advantage of people's desperation to leave and their inability to secure a visa by other means. The government replied in September that it was aware that Ukrainians who were seeking sanctuary under UK schemes were being exploited by organised crime networks, and said that officials across the Home Office, including Border Force, were working to identify and prevent instances such as these.

Settled had urged the Home Office to provide clear guidance for Border Force staff to issue temporary visa stamps to defrauded Ukrainians, and is now calling for greater communications and training to ensure that councils and other authorities recognise these stamps as legitimate.

The charity Opora is also frequently encountering Ukrainians targeted in visa scams, its managing director Stan Benes told The Independent. "It's safe to say that we get two to three messages from people in these positions every week," he said. "We try to make it as clear as possible in our communications that the Ukraine scheme visas are free, and that people need to have connected with a legitimate UK-based sponsor to apply. We always advise people to speak to their prospective hosts to get to know them and, ideally, to video call at least once."

It is also common for the scammers to tell refugees to enter the UK through Dublin, or Ireland more generally, since Ukrainians aren't always aware that Ireland isn't part of the UK, Mr Benes said.

Yuliia Ismail, a Ukraine schemes adviser at Settled, agreed that being told to travel via Ireland or by car, rather than taking a direct flight, is among several "red flags" Ukrainians should be aware of, as well as being unaware of their sponsor's identity prior to departure. "As a caseworker, I am working with this on a daily basis," Ms Ismail said.

Warning that increasing numbers of refugees appear to be being targeted, Chris Keppie of Settled suggested that this could be because Ukrainians are struggling to secure Homes for Ukraine sponsors, with fewer UK hosts volunteering.

Criminals are also possibly realising this and "getting more organised", he said, adding that some scam victims have previously lived in areas near the Zaporizhzhia power plant - where international fears of a nuclear disaster intensified this summer - and suggested that this could indicate that people's "real sudden panic and desperation" was being particularly exploited.

The British Red Cross also told The Independent that it was aware of a small number of cases in which UK hosts have paid for Ukrainian families to travel to the UK with a particular offer of work when they arrive. But upon their arrival, they discover that the employment conditions are vastly different from what was first agreed.

In some cases, children are discouraged from attending school, and the family is made to work in a way that is not compatible with a fair working arrangement, a spokesperson said. "We have also heard this being the case in situations where the added cost of living (utility bills, food costs) associated with hosting a family is used as the reason to put people to work in an exploitative way."

Other charities have previously warned of hosts charging refugees rent and excessive payments towards bills. However, of more than 80 councils contacted by The Independent, just six said they had encountered alleged fraud by people posing as Homes for Ukraine sponsors.

A recent change in the rules, which requires Ukrainians applying for a UK visa to attend an application centre in person, could in the longer term help counter these scams, Mr Keppie said.

But, adding that it is still very early days, he said: "We are certainly still seeing people who are victims of fraud arriving in the UK. Of course, this change will only help if people are fully aware of the UK process - sadly not always likely for vulnerable people in a war zone ... and so many previous victims of fraud hadn't been aware that the legitimate UK application process was free."

A government spokesperson said: "The UK has offered sanctuary to over 249,000 Ukrainians and family members fleeing Putin's illegal war. Our priority remains continuing to provide a safe and secure haven for those fleeing the conflict.

"The abuse of vulnerable people by organised criminal networks is reprehensible. We have robust measures in place to prevent abuse of the visa application process, including training for our decision-makers on detecting forgeries and the ability to interview applicants to help question their credibility and intentions."

If you are affected by these issues, the charity Settled offers free accredited advice in Ukrainian, at [*ukraineadvice@settled.org.uk*](mailto:ukraineadvice@settled.org.uk)

It has also created online leaflets in Ukrainian advising on how to avoid visa scams, and guidance for refugees struggling with UK accommodation.

**Load-Date:** December 25, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees get exemption from Trump-era border lockdown, memo says*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6517-CS11-JBNF-W154-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 17, 2022 Thursday 10:22 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 548 words

**Byline:** Andrew Feinberg

**Highlight:** Both the Trump and Biden administrations have used Title 42 to rapidly remove migrants encountered by Border Patrol agents from the US on public health grounds

**Body**

The Biden administration is letting US border agents exempt ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) from the Trump-era policy that has kept most South and Central American migrants from seeking asylum since March 2020.

An 11 March Customs and Border Protection (CBP) memorandum authorises officers, on a "case-by-case basis," to exempt Ukrainian nationals who arrive at US land border crossings from expulsion under a provision of US law - known as Title 42 - which both the Trump and Biden administrations have used to rapidly remove migrants encountered by Border Patrol agents from the US on public health grounds, specifically to prevent spread of Covid-19.

"The Department of Homeland Security recognises that the unjustified Russian war of aggression in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has created a humanitarian crisis," wrote Matthew Davies, the Customs and Border Protection director for admissibility and passenger programs.

"Non-citizens who are in possession of a valid Ukrainian passport or other valid Ukrainian identity document, and absent risk factors associated with national security or public safety, may be considered for exception from Title 42 under this guidance".

The Centers for Disease Control - the agency responsible for issuing the public health order invoking the Trump-era migrant ban - recently relaxed its own criteria to exempt unaccompanied, non-citizen children from expulsion, but immigration advocates and activists have been pressuring the White House to lift the expulsion order entirely.

Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has plunged Europe into the worst refugee crisis it has seen since the close of the Second World War.

According to the United Nations, more than 3 million Ukrainians have fled their country to avoid the death and destruction inflicted by Russian forces since the invasion began last month.

While US President Joe Biden has vowed to welcome ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** "with open arms," thus far the United States has not been a major destination for Ukrainians, the vast majority of whom have fled via land crossings to neighbouring countries such as Poland.

But according to Newsweek, those few who've fled to the US from Ukraine have found themselves in Immigrations and Customs Enforcement detention, and several Ukrainians who have fled to Mexico in hopes of crossing into the United States by land said they were unaware of whether they'd be summarily expelled from the country upon arrival.

The Independent has contacted the State Department for information on how many ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have entered the US since the start of Russia's invasion, but did not receive a reply before this article was published.

Asked about the dearth of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** entering the US at a press briefing on Thursday, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said Mr Biden is "willing" and "happy" to receive ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, but stressed that administration's response to the refugee crisis - including allocation of the $4bn in aid authorised by Congress earlier this week - has been focused on providing "humanitarian assistance" to support the millions who've fled to neighbouring countries.

She added that because the "vast, vast majority of refugees" fleeing Ukraine wish to remain in Europe, that is where the US government's attention has been thus far.

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Vacant properties 'could house 5,000 Ukrainian refugees in coming weeks'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:659R-CH31-JBNF-W018-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 26, 2022 Tuesday 6:20 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 387 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** Mr O'Brien said that 89 would be usable within the coming weeks, creating 5,000 beds for refugees.

**Body**

Nearly 90 state-owned properties are almost ready to be used to house ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Housing Minister Darragh O'Brien, speaking after a [*Cabinet*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cabinet) meeting, said that his department had identified 529 vacant or unused buildings that could be used to provide housing for arriving refugees from Ukraine.

Mr O'Brien said that 89 would be usable within the coming weeks, creating around 5,000 beds for refugees.

These would require "some work, but not extensive work", Mr O'Brien said.

"There is a spread right across the 26 counties," Mr O'Brien told Newstalk.

Around 25,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have now arrived in the [*Republic of Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/republic-ireland) , putting pressure on the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) to find housing and accommodation.

[*Mass*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mass) and emergency accommodation centres have already started to be used.

Mr O'Brien said that the accommodation would be a "little bit more long-term" than the Millstreet Arena in [*Cork*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cork) currently being used to house refugees.

"It is about moving quickly on these ones," he said.

Earlier, Taoiseach Micheal Martin had said that his Government will do "everything we possibly can" to provide for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving in Ireland.

Public Expenditure Minister Michael McGrath told Cabinet on Tuesday that Ireland is preparing to spend around three billion euro (£2.5 billion) in 2023 on welcoming and supporting those arriving from the war-torn country.

Mr Martin, speaking before Cabinet, said he had met refugees over the weekend.

"Their gratitude to the kindness of the people of Ireland was heartfelt," he said.

"This is a horrific war that is having a terrible toll on families and, in a shared humanity, we must do everything we possibly can within our energies and with our resources to do what we can.

"We want this war to end; it should end, because too much life has been lost."

Mr McGrath said the "primary focus" of Cabinet discussions on Tuesday will be accommodation for refugees.

He said ministers will be "looking at all of the options that are available to Government to find accommodation as quickly as possible".

"The system is now under real strain and we are at the point of offering accommodation that is not at the standard we would like but is necessary because ultimately these refugees are fleeing war and our first duty is to provide safety and security for them and to meet their basic needs," he said.

**Load-Date:** April 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Wizz Air offers 100,000 free flight tickets to Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X0-GH01-JBNF-W031-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 2, 2022 Wednesday 2:33 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS & ADVICE,TRAVEL; Version:1

**Length:** 456 words

**Byline:** Lucy Thackray

**Highlight:** 'Wizz is committed to helping ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** reach their destination, wherever that may be,' says airline

**Body**

Budget airline [*Wizz Air*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wizz-air) is offering 100,000 free seats to ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) to help them reach their destination, "wherever that may be".

The Hungarian low-cost carrier tweeted the news on Tuesday night, along with a dedicated "rescue" URL where anyone with a valid Ukrainian passport can apply for a free flight from four neighbouring countries to which Ukrainian civilians are fleeing.

"Wizz is committed to helping ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** reach their destination, wherever that may be," said the airline.

"We are providing 100,000 free seats on short-haul flights departing from Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania in March. Book your travel at [*wizzair.com/#/rescue*](https://t.co/eDw80hGC2k). "

The carrier will also offer a 29.99 (£25) "rescue fare" on all its other flights, to help citizens who are stranded elsewhere -passengers must give a Ukrainian passport number to qualify for these. Rescue fares will be more expensive on flights to the UAE, Iceland and Canada (69.99).

CEO of Wizz Air, Jozsef Varadi, said: "Our hearts are with the Ukrainian people during this crisis.

"We are committed to helping as many ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** as possible to get to a safe place, which is why we will be offering them 100,000 free seats from the border countries and special rescue fares on all other flights.

"We have already seen great humanitarian efforts on the ground by our people across the network, and as a company we wanted to play our part in these efforts."

Customers responded warmly to the move online -many of them calling on other airlines and rail companies to do the same, or asking if they could transfer unused air miles to Ukrainian passengers.

[*Eurostar has also extended offers of free Paris-London tickets to refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugees-eurostar-free-travel-train-b2026688.html%22%20title=%22Eurostar%20to%20let%20Ukrainian%20refugees%20travel%20to%20Britain%20for%20free%20on%20its%20trains) fleeing the Russian invasion in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) -though they will need to arrange a visa for travel to the UK before being able to claim it.

"If you have a valid visa to enter the UK, along with your Ukrainian passport, please speak to a member of the Eurostar team at Paris Nord, Brussels-Midi, Lille [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) or Amsterdam Central stations, and they will issue a ticket for travel to London," said Eurostar in an update.

"It is important to arrive with the necessary visa documents, as these will be checked by the UK Border Force during the check-in process."

Poland authorities estimate that around 350,000 Ukrainians have crossed its border since Russian troops invaded their country last Thursday; a million displaced people are expected to descend.

Political leaders from Finland, Germany, Moldova and Slovakia have also pledged their support for refugees.

Meanwhile, the UK's home secretary Priti Patel has refused to join the EU in waiving visa rules for Ukrainians, saying yesterday that [*it would undermine "the strongest security advice"*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-refugees-visa-uk-priti-patel-b2025000.html).

**Load-Date:** March 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Concern over rising number of Ukrainian refugees in UK facing homelessness*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67KK-V8T1-DY4H-K3NW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 20, 2023 Monday 12:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 1010 words

**Byline:** Aine Fox

**Highlight:** More than 4,000 Ukrainian households have required assistance from local authorities in the face of the risk of homelessness.

**Body**

Concerns are growing that increasing numbers of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the UK are facing homelessness or destitution, the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) has been warned.

The latest official figures show that 4,295 Ukrainian households have needed assistance from councils in the face of the risk of homelessness.

The data, up to January 27, is from 72% of English local authorities and so gives only a “partial picture of the true scale of homelessness faced by this refugee community”, the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Ending Homelessness said.

The cross-party coalition of more than 70 [*MPs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mps) and peers said it welcomed the Government’s response to the conflict in 2022 but called for more action “to ensure that refugees could access a safe and secure home and did not have to face homelessness”.

A letter, with signatories including former Home Secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) , has been sent to housing and homelessness minister Felicity Buchan.

The group said financial support for refugees could be made more flexible and pointed to differences in the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine Scheme – where people are sponsored by a UK household for six months – and the Ukraine Family Scheme, for those with family already settled in the UK.

The APPG cited research by the Work Rights Centre which it said had found more than twice as many Ukrainians under the family scheme were at imminent risk of eviction than those under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.

The group said this could be down to a “lack of financial support which forces Ukrainians and their family members to rely on their own financial resources to get by”.

Some 162,700 Ukrainians had arrived in the UK by February 13 under both schemes since they were launched in March last year, latest Government figures show.

Of those, 47,500 arrivals came under the family scheme, while 115,200 came under the sponsorship scheme.

The APPG has also called on the Government to “learn lessons from recent humanitarian crises and bring forward a new strategy for refugee integration and resettlement, to allow for a better co-ordinated response in the future”.

A refugees minister must be appointed, they said, with the post having been left vacant since Lord Harrington held the position between March and early September last year.

Such an appointment would “acknowledge the UK’s commitment to improving conditions for refugees in the UK” the APPG added.

In their letter, they stated that the most recent financial support package of £650 million, announced by the Government in December, is “very encouraging and continues the long and proud history of the UK providing a safe home to those who have been forced to flee due to conflict”.

More must be done to prevent increasing numbers of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** from being forced into homelessness

MPs Bob Blackman and Florence Eshalomi

But they added: “However, in the midst of the cost of living crisis, there are growing concerns that increasing numbers of Ukrainian arrivals are facing homelessness or destitution.”

The group said their members “very much share the Government’s commitment to tackling homelessness and feel that supporting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** during the cost-of-living crisis and beyond is an important part of this”.

They added: “We believe no Ukrainian who has found refuge in the UK after fleeing the devastating conflict at home should experience homelessness and be left without a safe place to live here.”

Two of the signatories, Conservative MP [*Bob Blackman*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bob-blackman) and Labour’s Florence Eshalomi, described it as “unacceptable that thousands of people who arrived in the UK to escape the conflict are now facing homelessness”.

They said: “While the announcement of continued funding under the existing schemes for both sponsors and refugees is welcome, more must be done to prevent increasing numbers of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** from being forced into homelessness.

“Unfortunately, many of the challenges facing refugees in securing safe housing are not unique to this community but rather indicative of the wider crisis across the country, as more and more people are forced into unstable living situations due to rising costs.”

Matt Downie, chief executive at homeless charity Crisis, said: “Although the visa schemes introduced by the Government have provided a lifeline for many refugees, it is incredibly concerning to hear that over 4,000 are now at risk of homelessness due to issues surrounding funding and financial support.

“What’s more, the severe shortage of affordable housing across the country has restricted their ability to move on into settled housing and rebuild their lives – an issue which is affecting far too many people in the UK as living costs continue to rise.

“We urge the Government to consider implementing changes to the existing schemes, as well as the introduction of a dedicated refugee resettlement strategy, to ensure no-one who has sought safety in the UK is left without a home and facing homelessness.”

Meanwhile the Local Government Association (LGA) echoed the call for more housing.

LGA chairman James Jamieson said Ukrainians are entering an already “logjammed system where we just do not have enough housing and every council has significant council house waiting lists”.

In December it was announced councils in England were getting a new £500 million fund to acquire housing stock for those fleeing conflict, including from Ukraine and Afghanistan.

Mr Jamieson said that while positive, the fund is something that must be built on.

He said: “Longer term, the key thing is how do we get more housing. We’re very pleased with the £500 million scheme but actually, if we can build upon that, that would be very helpful to get more housing.”

A Government spokesman said: “Since Russia’s illegal invasion, the UK has welcomed over 162,000 Ukrainians to safety, demonstrating the extraordinary generosity of the British public.”

He added that local authorities “have a legal duty to ensure no families are left without a roof over their heads” and referred to Government help already in place to support councils with “more resources to help them address these challenges”.

**Load-Date:** February 19, 2023

**End of Document**



[*UK's Prince Charles visits Ukrainian refugees in Romania*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65HX-PX11-DY4H-K2PR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 25, 2022 Wednesday 7:14 PM GMT

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**Length:** 330 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Charles, Prince of Wales traveled to Romania's capital on Wednesday to visit refugees, mostly women and children, that have found safety in the Eastern European country after fleeing Russia's war in Ukraine

**Body**

Britain's [*Prince Charles*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-charles) traveled to [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) 's capital Wednesday to visit refugees, mostly women and children, from Russia's war in Ukraine who have found safety in the neighboring Eastern European country.

The [*Prince of Wales*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-of-wales) visited the Romexpo Donation Centre for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Bucharest. There, he met some of the nearly 1 million Ukrainians who have reached Romania since the war began on Feb. 24, and observed the relief effort being mounted by the government and volunteers.

Speaking to a group of Ukrainians through an interpreter, Charles apologized for his lack of language skills, saying, "I wish my Ukrainian was better."

"We feel for you greatly, it's a nightmare situation," he said. "I'm full of admiration for the Ukrainian people. Total, extraordinary courage and resilience."

During his visit, Charles received a gift from some of the Ukrainian children at the center: wooden spoons painted in traditional Ukrainian patterns.

"Marvelous, thank you, thank you," Charles told one of the children. "I love the way you painted that."

Joining Charles were representatives of the Red Cross, the Salvation Army and the U.N. refugee agency, as well as the mayor of Bucharest and members of other state relief agencies.

Over 1,000 Ukrainians visit the donation center daily to get free supplies like food, hygiene products, clothing and shoes, according to the managers of the facility. Refugees also have access to social services and counsel while they remain in Romania.

The visit was the latest of a number of engagements Charles has had with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in recent weeks. According to the British Embassy in Bucharest, he visited a Ukrainian community in Ottawa, Canada last week, where he met with a family displaced by the war.

More than 972,000 Ukrainians have fled into Romania since [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) launched its invasion of Ukraine, according to the U.N. refugee agency.

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Follow the AP's coverage of the Ukraine war at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** May 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[*More than half of Britons 'support no-visa policy for Ukrainian refugees'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6537-G0M1-JBNF-W1TR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 27, 2022 Sunday 12:51 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 350 words

**Byline:** Rebecca Speare-Cole

**Highlight:** The Government continues to face criticism that its current policies do not go far enough to help those fleeing the conflict.

**Body**

More than half of [*Britons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britons) think the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) should drop visa requirements for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, according to a new poll.

The research, conducted by Savanta ComRes for the Independent, found that 54% back a no-visa policy, allowing unlimited numbers of Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion.

This compares to just 21% who said the Government should keep the requirements, the publication reported.

The poll also found that public opinion on Boris Johnson's response to the conflict may have been marred by his Government's refugee policy.

While 53% said the Prime Minister has had a good overall approach to the war, only 42% said this was the case when it came to refugees.

There are two UK schemes for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***: the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine sponsorship scheme, for which anybody with space to house a refugee can apply; and the Ukraine family scheme, for those who already have relatives in the UK.

Some 21,000 visas had been issued under the Ukraine family scheme as of Friday, and a total of 36,300 applications had been submitted, according to provisional data published on the Home Office's website.

But the Government continues to face criticism that the policies do not go far enough to help those fleeing the conflict.

[*Sadiq Khan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sadiq-khan) on Saturday said the UK should be doing "much more" to aid ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** as he joined a march in support of the country.

The [*Mayor*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mayor) of London joined a large crowd near Hyde Park for a march and vigil to send a unified message of support to the people of Ukraine.

Speaking ahead of the demonstration, he told the PA news agency: "Londoners over the last few weeks have shown that we're opening our arms to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, whether it's by donating money to those charities doing a brilliant job in Ukraine or by opening our homes to those fleeing Ukraine.

"It is important throughout the next few days, weeks to make it far, far easier, and much more easier for those who are fleeing Ukraine to come here.

"You compare our Government's actions versus the actions of Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Poland, it's embarrassing.

"We've got be doing much more."

**Load-Date:** March 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Resilience of Ukrainian refugees ‘shines out’, says William during Poland visit*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67V9-6VY1-DY4H-K4W0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 23, 2023 Thursday 2:05 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 575 words

**Byline:** Ted Hennessey

**Highlight:** The Prince of Wales visited the Hala Koszyki food hall in Warsaw to speak to those who have fled Ukraine.

**Body**

[*The*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/the) Prince of Wales has praised the resilience of young ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** living in [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland).

William, on the second day of his surprise trip to the country, visited the Hala Koszyki food hall in [*Warsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warsaw) to speak to those who have fled Ukraine.

The prince joined them at tables on Thursday afternoon and heard about their experiences settling into Polish life.

William told them: “It must be very difficult to start an entire new life in a new country.

“It’s amazing how resilient you are. That shines out.”

He also spoke to people who have hosted refugees, and thanked them for their kindness.

The casually dressed prince was also greeted by well-wishers outside the venue and given flowers.

Three women held a sign reading: “Thank you for the visit William.”

One of them, Olga Mieszejewska-Buchalik, who travelled three hours from south Poland, told reporters: “I said that we really appreciated his support for our nation and Ukraine.”

Vonya Bultruski, 26, who spoke to the prince, told the PA news agency: “I told him how much his support for refugees means, he’s a very kind man.

“I’m very happy to see him in Poland, it is a big moment for my country.”

Marta Galinska, 47, a milliner, gave William a pink felt hat she made for the Princess of Wales.

William had earlier met Poland’s president [*Andrzej Duda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/andrzej-duda) at the Presidential Palace, where they discussed the war in Ukraine.

A spokesperson for the prince said: “The conversation was warm and friendly, and predominantly focused on the ongoing conflict with the war in Ukraine, particularly its impact on Polish society.

“The Prince of Wales took the opportunity to thank the president and the Polish people who have done so much to support the people of Ukraine who’ve fled here.

“They discussed the importance of the need for ongoing support to Ukraine and its people.

“The prince said he was very much looking forward to seeing the president and first lady at the Coronation.

“He also thanked him for attending the late Queen’s funeral.”

William also echoed his late grandmother the Queen by laying a wreath at a monument dedicated to soldiers.

Queen Elizabeth II and the late Duke of [*Edinburgh*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/edinburgh) did the same during their state visit to Poland in 1996.

William was greeted by a guard of honour and carried the assortment of flowers to the monument, spending around 10 minutes there before leaving.

On the wreath was a note reading: “In memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice.”

William has said the two-day trip will allow him to personally thank troops and “underline” his support and gratitude for the Polish people who have aided ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

It came after he thanked British troops roughly an hour’s drive from the Ukrainian border for “defending our freedoms” by “keeping an eye on” the situation in Ukraine.

After arriving at the defence military base in the south-eastern Polish city of Rzeszow on Wednesday afternoon, the prince, dressed casually in a black puffer jacket and trousers, was shown a missile launcher.

Speaking to the soldiers, he said: “I just wanted to come here in person to say thank you for all that you’re doing, keeping everyone safe out here and keeping an eye on what’s going on.

“So, just a big thank you for what you do on a day-to-day basis.”

He added: “You’re doing a really important job out here and defending our freedoms is really important, and everyone back home thoroughly supports you.”

It is his first trip to Poland since he visited in 2017 with his wife Kate.

**Load-Date:** March 23, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Ireland planning for potential arrival of 200,000 Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6527-D2J1-DY4H-K106-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 22, 2022 Tuesday 11:25 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 335 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** The Irish Government has already welcomed around 10,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** but is preparing for tens of thousands more.

**Body**

The [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) Government is planning for the potential arrival of 200,000 Ukrainians into the country as the Russian invasion continues.

A [*Cabinet*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cabinet) meeting later on Tuesday will see ministers discuss the crisis in war-torn Ukraine as well as the Irish response.

The Irish Government has already welcomed about 10,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** into the country but is preparing for tens of thousands more.

The 200,000 figure is based on the expectation that 2% of the 10 million people likely set to flee Ukraine could come to the Republic of [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland).

The best possible arrangements must be put in place to accommodate them to meet their basic needs, to ensure that they are sheltered and looked after

Agriculture minister Charlie McConalogue

Agriculture Minister Charlie McConalogue said on Tuesday that planning is continuing into how to provide adequate accommodation and support for refugees arriving into the country.

"While there isn't the opportunity to put long-term permanent accommodation in place overnight, the best possible arrangements must be put in place to accommodate them to meet their basic needs, to ensure that they are sheltered and looked after, and have access to education and healthcare, and, indeed, employment," he told RTE radio.

"So, it's going to be a challenge as we move along."

Mr McConalogue is seeking Cabinet approval for a 12 million euro (£10 million) package for tillage farmers in a bid to boost production amid the disruption caused by the war in Ukraine.

Farmers have already reported a spike in the cost of fertiliser and animal feed.

Tillage farmers will play a "really, really important" role in food production and grain production, the minister said.

However, he acknowledged the growing burden of high costs facing farmers.

"It will be more challenging this year from a cost point of view, from a supply chain point of view, I think we will meet those challenges and we will continue to ensure that we produce food as we normally do, and indeed supply internationally as well," he said.

**Load-Date:** March 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Prince of Wales to meet Ukrainian refugees in Poland after military base visit*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67V6-Y5X1-JBNF-W0S4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 23, 2023 Thursday 12:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK NEWS,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:2

**Length:** 444 words

**Byline:** Ted Hennessey

**Highlight:** William is also set to meet Polish President Andrzej Duda in Warsaw.

**Body**

The [*Prince of Wales*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-of-wales) is to speak with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and pay tribute to the “inspiring humanity” of Polish people who have helped them.

William, on the second day of his surprise trip to [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , will visit the Hala Koszyki food hall in [*Warsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warsaw) to hear from those who have left Ukraine after Russia’s invasion last year.

The prince is also set to meet Polish President [*Andrzej Duda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/andrzej-duda) at the Presidential Palace and lay a wreath at the [*Tomb of the Unknown Soldier*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tomb-of-the-unknown-soldier) , echoing the visit of the late Queen and Duke of Edinburgh, who did the same in 1996.

It’s fantastic to be back in Poland. Our nations have strong ties. Through our co-operation in support of the people of Ukraine and their freedom, which are also our freedoms and yours, these ties are further strengthened

Prince of Wales

William has said the two-day trip will allow him to personally thank troops and “underline” his support and gratitude for the Polish people who have aided ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Landing in Warsaw on Wednesday, the prince said: “It’s fantastic to be back in Poland.

“Our nations have strong ties. Through our co-operation in support of the people of Ukraine and their freedom, which are also our freedoms and yours, these ties are further strengthened.

“I’m here because I want to personally thank the Polish and British troops working in close and crucial partnership.

“I also want to pay tribute to the inspiring humanity of the Polish people. You have opened your hearts as much as your homes.

“That’s why this afternoon I visited Rzeszow to meet troops based there to hear their stories and recognise their duty.

“I was struck by their passion as well as their shared determination to defend our shared freedoms.”

It came after he thanked British troops roughly an hour’s drive from the Ukrainian border for “defending our freedoms” by “keeping an eye on” the situation in Ukraine.

After arriving at the defence military base in the south-eastern Polish city of Rzeszow on Wednesday afternoon, the prince, dressed casually in a black puffer jacket and trousers, was shown a missile launcher.

Speaking to the soldiers, he said: “I just wanted to come here in person to say thank you for all that you’re doing, keeping everyone safe out here and keeping an eye on what’s going on.

“So, just a big thank you for what you do on a day-to-day basis.”

He added: “You’re doing a really important job out here and defending our freedoms is really important, and everyone back home thoroughly supports you.”

The base, made up of a coalition of British, Polish and US troops, is helping to aid support to Ukraine.

It is his first trip to Poland since he visited in 2017 with his wife the Princess of Wales.

**Load-Date:** March 23, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Tory MP accused of 'immoral and offensive bile' over Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YN-3R41-DY4H-K18V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 10, 2022 Thursday 7:40 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 384 words

**Byline:** Sam Blewett

**Highlight:** Daniel Kawczynski was severely criticised by a senior Conservative colleague.

**Body**

A [*Conservative*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/conservative) MP has been accused by a senior colleague of spouting "utterly risible, illiterate, immoral and offensive bile" over ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

[*Daniel Kawczynski*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/daniel-kawczynski) claimed "[*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) left-wing parties" are making "illiterate and immoral" demands for the UK to accept more people fleeing Vladimir Putin's invasion.

The MP for [*Shrewsbury*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/shrewsbury) and Atcham argued that Britain should support Ukraine's neighbours because "Ukrainians will need to return home to rebuild their country" when the war is over.

But Simon Hoare, chairman of the Commons Northern Ireland Committee, told Mr Kawczynski he does "not speak for the Tory Party".

What utterly risible, illiterate immoral and offensive bile. Haven't you heard what [*@BorisJohnson*](https://twitter.com/BorisJohnson?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) has been saying? You do not speak for the Tory Party. I'm not sure you speak for humanity [*#whitehotfury*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/whitehotfury?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*https://t.co/l6O0Jla0OO*](https://t.co/l6O0Jla0OO) - Simon Hoare MP (@Simon4NDorset) [*March 10, 2022*](https://twitter.com/Simon4NDorset/status/1501797626706018304?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

In a 5.50am tweet, Mr Hoare said: "What utterly risible, illiterate, immoral and offensive bile. Haven't you heard what @BorisJohnson has been saying?

"You do not speak for the Tory Party. I'm not sure you speak for humanity #whitehotfury."

The online dispute came as the Tories, and Home Secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) in particular, come under vast pressure to improve British efforts to help those fleeing the war.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson is resisting widespread calls, including from Kyiv, to drop visa requirements for Ukrainians, instead insisting security checks are needed to prevent the Russian president sending agents to the UK.

Despite more than 2.1 million people having fled Ukraine according to UN estimates, the latest figures from Downing Street say the UK has granted just 957 visas.

Against this backdrop, Mr Kawczynski tweeted: "British Left wing parties demand Britain takes in more ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. This is illiterate and immoral.

"When war is over Ukrainians will need to return home to rebuild their country. We should be supporting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in frontline states like Poland & Romania."

Mr Kawczynski later deleted the tweet and blocked the Twitter account of the PA news agency journalist who reported on Mr Hoare's criticism.

In January, Mr Kawczynski was suspended from the Commons for a single day for undermining an apology he gave for bullying staff.

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UK to widen access for Ukrainian refugees seeking to join family members*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WS-C091-DY4H-K41D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 1, 2022 Tuesday 1:42 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 296 words

**Byline:** David Hughes

**Highlight:** Boris Johnson said 'considerable numbers' of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** would be taken in by the UK.

**Body**

More Ukrainians will be allowed to enter the UK to join family members as they flee the war zone, [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) announced.

The [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) has been criticised by Tory and opposition MPs for the response to the refugee crisis, but the [*Prime Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prime-minister) insisted the widened access would allow "very considerable numbers" of Ukrainians to come.

A new scheme will also allow individuals and organisations to sponsor ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to come to the UK.

The first phase of the plan had allowed people in Ukraine who had immediate family members in the UK to come and join them, but the move was criticised for being too restrictive.

On a visit to Poland - where refugees have been crossing the border from Ukraine following the Russian invasion - Mr Johnson promised to do more.

He told his Polish counterpart Mateusz Morawiecki: "We stand ready, clearly, to take ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in our own country, working with you, in considerable numbers, as we always have done and always will."

Downing Street said people living in the UK would now be allowed to bring in "adult parents, grandparents, children over 18 and siblings" in addition to those who had previously been allowed.

The Prime Minister's official spokesman said that would widen eligibility to around 200,000 people, twice the number previously estimated.

Mr Johnson said later: "What we are going to do is we are extending the family scheme so that actually very considerable numbers would be eligible ... you could be talking about a couple of hundred thousand, maybe more.

"Additionally, we are going to have a humanitarian scheme and then a scheme by which UK companies and citizens can sponsor individual Ukrainians to come to the UK."

Home Secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) is expected to give further details of the plans in the Commons.

**Load-Date:** March 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Poland prepares to accept Ukrainian refugees in case of war*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64SJ-SMT1-JBNF-W399-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 14, 2022 Monday 1:22 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS; Version:1

**Length:** 603 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Poland is the largest European Union nation to border Ukraine and the government is making preparations to accept ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the event of another Russian attack on that country

**Body**

Poland, the largest [*European Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/european-union) nation to border Ukraine, is making preparations to accept ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the event of another Russian attack on that country. But the Polish government hopes that worst-case scenario can be averted.

Similar preparations are being made across the region, particularly in those nations which share borders with Ukraine.

As other countries draw down their diplomatic missions in Ukraine, Poland says it is for now keeping its diplomatic operations in place in case they are needed to facilitate a large-scale exit of Ukrainians.

Poland, which has welcomed large numbers of Ukrainian economic migrants in recent years, particularly after Russia's incursions into Ukraine in 2014, has been making plans for weeks to accept refugees if it comes to that, said Marcin Przydacz, a deputy foreign minister.

While Poland has an image of being staunchly anti-refugee, that opposition is largely based on not wanting to take in large numbers of people of different religious and racial backgrounds.

Ukrainians - who like Poles are a Slavic people with a similar language and customs - have filled gaps in the labor market and have been largely welcomed in Poland in recent years.

Przydacz said in a radio interview on Monday that Poland hopes the situation in Ukraine won't escalate, but that the country was preparing for any possibility, including the possibility of large numbers of refugees.

"In this worst-case scenario, we are not talking about hundreds or thousands, but much larger numbers," Przydacz said on Radio Plus.

He added that the [*Interior Ministry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/interior-ministry) has been preparing "internal scenarios, infrastructure and plans" for many weeks.

The plans would include housing refugees in hostels, dormitories, sports facilities and other venues.

Local officials, including town mayors, have been asked to draw up reports of what facilities they could make available, according to Krzysztof KosiÅski, the mayor of Ciechanow, a Polish town near the border with Ukraine, and the secretary of the Association of Polish Cities.

Ukraine, which is bordered by Belarus to the north and Russia to the east, also shares borders with the EU nations of Poland, [*Slovakia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/slovakia) [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) and Romania, as well as the non-EU state of Moldova.

Hungary's nationalist prime minister, Viktor Orban, warned Saturday that a Russian invasion of Ukraine could send hundreds of thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing across the border into his country.

Meanwhile, Slovakia is also preparing for a wave of refugees in the case of a conflict. The government has prepared a plan what to do in such a scenario, but it is classified.

"According to the existing studies and analysis, I can say that even a limited Russian military attack on Ukrainian territory would mean tens of thousands of refugees crossing our border," Slovakian Defense Minister Jaroslav Nad said.

Nad said those fleeing a war would receive refugee status.

"From the European continent's perspective, the current situation is the most dangerous since World War II," Nad said.

Czech Interior Minister Vit Rakusan has offered to send police officers to help Slovakia in the case of such a conflict.

\_\_\_

Karel Janicek in Prague, and Justin Spike in Budapest, Hungary, contributed to this report.

Read More

[*What is happening with Russia and Ukraine? The crisis explained*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-explained-simple-guide-b2014561.html)

[*Why is Russia threatening to invade Ukraine?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-invasion-explained-why-b2014529.html)

[*Poland prepares for influx of* ***Ukrainian******refugees*** *if Russia invades*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugees-poland-b2014385.html)

[*Britons with spouses in Ukraine 'praying' for safety of loved ones*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/britons-ukraine-foreign-office-kharkiv-newcastle-b2014276.html)

[*Ukraine turmoil could 'kick off quite quickly', says British student who fled*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ukraine-british-foreign-office-kyiv-britons-b2014264.html)

[*Irish citizens advised to leave Ukraine immediately*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/ukraine-vladimir-putin-irish-department-of-foreign-affairs-kyiv-b2013838.html)

**Load-Date:** February 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Surge in Ukrainian refugees becoming homeless in UK*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67KM-DM51-JCS0-D1XP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

February 20, 2023 Monday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 13

**Length:** 850 words

**Byline:** HOLLY BANCROFT SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

The government must act immediately to help thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who are facing homelessness in the UK, a cross-party coalition of MPs and peers has warned. More than 4,200 Ukrainian households have presented as homeless to English councils since February last year, with 30 per cent of those doing so in the period from November to January.

More than 70 MPs and peers, including the former home secretary Priti Patel and deputy speaker Dame Rosie Winterton, have signed an open letter calling on the government to widen the funding available to sponsors to ensure that no Ukrainian seeking refuge in the UK is left facing homelessness.

The letter also calls for the appointment of a new minister for refugees following the resignation of Lord Harrington. "In the midst of the cost of living crisis there are growing concerns that increasing numbers of Ukrainian arrivals are facing homelessness or destitution," the letter adds.

MPs also urged the government to consider the policy recommendations put forward by the All-Party Parliamentary Groups for Ending Homelessness, which include increased flexibility in funding for hosts and more money for those on the family scheme. The co-chairs of the APPG, Bob Blackman MP and Florence Eshalomi MP, said "more must be done" to address the crisis.

Ukrainian refugee Anna\*, who has a medical degree, came to the UK via Poland in May last year. Since then, she has lived in three different homes with three different sponsors due to the living arrangements breaking down. She had to register herself as at risk of homelessness with her local London council but struggled to get sufficient help from the local authority. She has also struggled to find work or private accommodation.

"My sponsorship is ending next month and I haven't heard from the council in the last two weeks. I don't have any opportunity to live independently at the moment so I am looking for a new sponsor. The council said they would help me look but that doesn't guarantee that they will find any. Previously, at the end of May, when I was in a similar situation, they told me that I should look for a sponsor myself," she told The Independent.

Anna had to leave her second sponsorship after she found a month's work project in a different part of the UK. The host wouldn't let her hold onto the placement while she was away, she explained. Her first sponsorship broke down when the landlord told her sponsor he didn't want any refugees in his property.

"I struggle to rent anywhere privately because I need deposits and a guarantor who would sign on the contract. Nobody wants to rent to people on benefits. It's the same problem that local UK people have with renting but just double it for people who don't speak English that well," she added. She said her ordeal has affected her mental health. "My journey to the UK already traumatised me and I am very grateful for my life here but sometimes I am finding it hard," she said.

The number of Ukrainian families facing homelessness in England has increased by 44 per cent over the winter months as sponsorship arrangements continue to break down. As of November 2022, 199,500 visa applications had been granted to Ukrainians under the family scheme or the sponsorship scheme.

The Independent has previously revealed that some Ukrainians are facing a very real choice between becoming homeless in the UK or returning to their wartorn country. Councils offer a varying range of support across the country, despite their legal obligations to house Ukrainians if they do not have anywhere to live.

In one case, Ealing council told a 23-year-old woman that it was unlikely to be able to help her because she did not have "severe health needs". Thousands of Ukrainians have also been placed in hotel accommodation by councils which are struggling to deal with the rising number becoming homeless.

Mr Blackman and Ms Eshalomi said: "As we approach a year since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, it is unacceptable that thousands of people who arrived in the UK to escape the conflict are now facing homelessness.

"While the announcement of continued funding under the existing schemes for both sponsors and refugees is welcome, more must be done to prevent increasing numbers of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** from being forced into homelessness."

Matt Downie, chief executive of homelessness charity Crisis, said that the "severe shortage of affordable housing" is preventing Ukrainians from moving on from sponsorships and rebuilding their lives. "We urge the government to consider implementing changes to the existing schemes, as well as the introduction of a dedicated refugee resettlement strategy," he said.

A government spokesperson said: "We are giving councils more resources to help them address these challenges. For those on the Homes for Ukraine scheme, we are providing councils with per-person funding, as well as £150m to support guests into their own homes and £500m to find housing, and we also extended and increased 'thank you' payments for sponsors to try to ensure sponsorships last as long as possible."

\* Anna's name has been changed

**Load-Date:** February 19, 2023

**End of Document**



[*France condemns 'inhumane' British policy on Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XV-BS81-DY4H-K2C9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 6, 2022 Sunday 2:24 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:3

**Length:** 800 words

**Byline:** Sophie Wingate

**Highlight:** It is claimed hundreds have been diverted from Calais to UK consulates in Paris and Brussels because they did not have a valid visa.

**Body**

[*France*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/france) has urged Britain to do more to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** trying to come to the UK from [*Calais*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/calais) , as Justice Secretary [*Dominic Raab*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dominic-raab) defended the visa rules for those fleeing the conflict.

French interior minister Gerald Darmanin on Sunday said it was "inhumane" of the UK to turn away refugees arriving at the French port city if they did not have a valid visa.

He said he had asked Home Secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) to establish a consular presence there.

Mr Darmanin told Europe 1 radio: "I called my [*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) counterpart twice.

"I asked her to set up a consulate in Calais that can process people's paperwork and issue visas."

The British must put their rhetoric into action

Gerald Darmanin, French interior minister

Hundreds of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Calais have been told by British authorities to obtain a visa at UK consulates in Paris or Brussels, Mr Darmanin said, calling it "a bit inhumane" to expect them to travel all the way there after their long journeys from Ukraine.

"The British must put their rhetoric into action, I've heard the big words of generosity from Mr (Boris) Johnson," Mr Darmanin said.

"I hope this will allow the English to open their arms a little and stop the technocratic nit-picking".

But Home Secretary Priti Patel said nobody had been turned away.

She said: "Let me just correct what has been said by the French government. The British Government is not turning anybody around or turning anybody back at all.

"And I think it's really important to emphasise that, particularly at this time, when all nations across Europe must work together to help and support people in need and fleeing Ukraine at this awful, awful time."

The Home Secretary said it is "wrong to say that we are turning people back, we are not".

She added: "I have staff in Calais to provide support to Ukrainian families that have left Ukraine to come to the United Kingdom. It is wrong and it is inaccurate to say that we are not providing support on the ground. We are."

Asked earlier about reports that 150 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** had been turned away at Calais, Mr Raab suggested support would be undermined for Ukraine if the UK lets refugees in without visas.

The Justice Secretary told the BBC's Sunday Morning programme: "If we just open the door, not only will we not benefit the people that we need to, the genuine refugees, but I think we undermine the popular support for this very thing, so I don't think that's the right thing to do. We need to make sure that we're acting for those that need our support."

On security checks, he told ITV News: "I think we're doing the right thing in the right way. There's been a question about whether we should have security checks.

"This is people coming from a war zone. It is absolutely right, given the foreign fighters that are there alongside of the Russians, that we make sure that we do have security checks precisely so that our generosity is directed to those who deserve our compassion, not those who might seek to harm us."

Mr Raab said he expects up to 200,000 Ukrainians could come to the UK through the family dependents route, while "the humanitarian route, that is uncapped".

He said: "We'll work with the United Nations and other agencies, but also individuals, business, charitable sponsors here, and that route for Ukrainians fleeing persecution is uncapped. And of course, we provided £220 million of humanitarian support, which is directly for the Ukrainian people, but also for those countries taking refugees.

"You find this with conflict situations, most people want to go... either stay in their country of birth and origin or go to a country nearby, so they can return later. I think we can expect that with Ukraine."

Asked by ITV News presenter Nina Hossain whether the Government should make it as simple as it was for his father, who fled Czechoslovakia from the Nazis, to come to the UK, the Deputy Prime Minister said: "I don't need to be lectured by you about what my father went through.

"You are talking about something you know little about. It was incredibly difficult for my father to get to the UK."

Under the UK's recently-extended visa scheme, Ukrainians with parents, grandparents, children and siblings already in the UK are allowed to stay for up to three years.

The offer does not match that of EU countries, which have waived visa rules for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, letting them in for up to three years without first having to seek asylum.

More than 1.5 million refugees have already streamed out of Ukraine, the United Nations said as Russia's unprovoked assault on the country entered its 11th day on Sunday.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi tweeted: "More than 1.5 million refugees from Ukraine have crossed into neighbouring countries in 10 days - the fastest growing refugee crisis in Europe since World War II."

**Load-Date:** March 6, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Number of Ukrainian refugees in Ireland exceeds 10,000*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6528-2X71-DY4H-K4M3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 22, 2022 Tuesday 3:29 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 681 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** Earlier, the Agriculture Minister said that it was possible that 200,000 Ukrainians might come to the Republic of Ireland.

**Body**

Over 10,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, mostly women and children, have arrived in [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) since the war began in the eastern European country.

At a [*Cabinet*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cabinet) meeting on Tuesday, attended virtually from Washington by the Taoiseach after he tested positive for Covid-19 last week, the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) continued preparations for tens of thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving into the country in the coming weeks.

Earlier, the Agriculture Minister said that it was possible that 200,000 Ukrainians might arrive into the [*Republic of Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/republic-ireland) in the months to come, with the Government pledged to take in 2% of all refugees who flee the war-torn country.

The Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth confirmed on Tuesday that 4,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have sought state accommodation, with 2,200 in hotels.

Roderic O'Gorman also said that the Government was working with state agencies and religious organisations in a bid to secure longer-term accommodation.

Irish people have shown enormous solidarity and support for people fleeing the conflict in Ukraine. 20,000 people have pledged offers of accommodation through [*@irishredcross*](https://twitter.com/irishredcross?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) , and my Department will begin assessing these properties this week, first prioritising vacant homes. [*pic.twitter.com/QlET3GmAjr*](https://t.co/QlET3GmAjr) - Roderic O'Gorman TD (@rodericogorman) [*March 22, 2022*](https://twitter.com/rodericogorman/status/1506249014202753030?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

"We are only 27 days into this crisis.

"There are significantly more amounts of work that needs to be done," Mr O'Gorman said at a post-Cabinet briefing.

"We are now looking at the ways we can accommodate large numbers of people in the medium-to-long term."

"I think it is important to say we are taking as wide a review as possible on this.

"We are aware of the scale of the challenge."

Speaking alongside him, the Social Protection Minister Heather Humphreys confirmed that anyone who takes in a Ukrainian refugee will see no impact to welfare entitlements.

There had been concerns raised that anyone in receipt of a living alone payment would be disqualified if they took in a Ukrainian refugee.

She also said that the vast majority Ukrainians arriving into Ireland were women and children.

The best possible arrangements must be put in place to accommodate them to meet their basic needs, to ensure that they are sheltered and looked after

Agriculture minister Charlie McConalogue

Agriculture Minister Charlie McConalogue received Cabinet approval on Tuesday for a 12 million euro (£10 million) package for tillage farmers in a bid to boost production amid the disruption caused by the war in Ukraine.

Farmers have already reported a spike in the cost of fertiliser and animal feed.

Tillage farmers will play a "really, really important" role in food production and grain production, the minister told RTE radio on Tuesday.

However, he acknowledged the growing burden of high costs facing farmers.

"It will be more challenging this year from a cost point of view, from a supply chain point of view, I think we will meet those challenges and we will continue to ensure that we produce food as we normally do, and indeed supply internationally as well," he said.

Speaking on his way into Cabinet, Tanaiste Leo Varadkar said: "What we are seeing unfolding in Mariupol are war crimes, there can be no doubt about that.

"Something we didn't think we would see again in the 21st century in Europe."

He said that he believed the economic impact of the war in Ukraine on the country would be "manageable".

However, he not underplay the extent of the challenge facing the country, noting that 100,000 refugees would amount to an approximate 2% increase in the Irish population in a matter of weeks.

Foreign Affairs Minister [*Simon Coveney*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/simon-coveney) said that the Republic of Ireland had no choice but to act.

"The number of people who have currently fled from Ukraine into the EU is the equivalent of every woman and child in Ireland.

"The expectation is that that number could increase significantly further.

"I think every country in the EU is planning for that and Ireland is no different.

"This isn't a question of whether we can accommodate X number of people, it's how we will."

**Load-Date:** March 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ireland prepares to welcome thousands of Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y3-BBX1-JBNF-W1FS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 8:31 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 1056 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** Around 1,800 Ukrainians have already arrived in Ireland since the outbreak of war, the Government has confirmed.

**Body**

Around 1,800 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have already arrived in [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) since the outbreak of war, the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) has confirmed.

It comes as the [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) Red Cross, working with the Irish Government, launched an online system allowing people to register offers of accommodation for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Taoiseach Micheal Martin said on Monday morning that around 1,800 people from Ukraine have arrived in Ireland since Russian invaded.

The Irish premier said that [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) was looking at a "major humanitarian crisis".

He said that 486 refugees arrived on Sunday and while around two-thirds of people have family connections in Ireland, that proportion is falling as the crisis escalates.

"More and more who don't have connections with families in Ireland are arriving and it is fair to say we can expect that to increase significantly over the coming weeks," Mr Martin told Newstalk.

"This is a major humanitarian crisis on the continent of Europe and the response to that will have to be outside of the norm.

"This is an exceptional humanitarian crisis brought about by war and it is a wartime situation, and therefore our responses have to be different to a non-wartime situation," Mr Martin predicted.

As the world responds to the assault on Ukraine by Vladimir Putin, countries in Europe are preparing for a surge in refugees.

The United Nations announced over the weekend that more than 1.5 million people have fled Ukraine.

More than 2,500 offers had already been made in Ireland for accommodation and support for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** as of Monday evening, as the Irish Government and the Irish Red Cross marked the launch of the online portal.

Equality Minister Roderic O'Gorman said that all offers are "hugely welcome".

"It's important that people are aware that not all offers may be called upon immediately.

"In thanking people for coming forward, I would also ask for patience as we scale up what will be an enormous logistical response."

Ireland stands in solidarity with all those fleeing Ukraine. Today, my Department, working with the [*@irishredcross*](https://twitter.com/irishredcross?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) has launched a national accommodation pledge portal to register potential accommodation for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.Full details: [*https://t.co/C29GjSWdVw*](https://t.co/C29GjSWdVw) - Roderic O'Gorman TD (@rodericogorman) [*March 7, 2022*](https://twitter.com/rodericogorman/status/1500884543817011209?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Health Minister Stephen Donnelly also said that Ireland would provide medical cards and access to healthcare to those fleeing the war.He suggested that the Government was working on the assumption that a "very, very large number" Ukrainians could come to Ireland for refuge.The pledges came on a day of drama at the Russian Embassy, after a man was arrested after a large lorry crashed into the gates of the embassy in Dublin.Irish police said the lorry hit the gates of the embassy on Orwell Road in south Dublin.The incident provoked an angry response from the Russian Embassy, with a spokeswoman accusing the Irish police of standing "idle" as the incident took place.The Embassy has also accused Ireland of breaching the Vienna Convention by not protecting the premises from any damage.Earlier, the first Irish politicians to visit Ukraine since the outbreak of war predicted that Irish families will have to play their part and open their homes to refugees.Fianna Fail senator Timmy Dooley and MEP Billy Kelleher travelled to the Ukrainian city of [*Lviv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lviv) for talks with political leaders.Mr Dooley, the vice president of the EU Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (Alde), travelled 100 kilometres from the Polish border into Ukraine on Sunday.It is understood they are the first Irish politicians to visit the country since the Russian invasion.Went at invitation of our political colleagues in the Ukraine.We saw first hand the appalling suffering of people trying to get to European Union. Will ask our Political Parties at European level to request more support for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.Lucinda I hope you will too [*https://t.co/gSSVaGhlys*](https://t.co/gSSVaGhlys) - Billy Kelleher MEP (@BillyKelleherEU) [*March 6, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BillyKelleherEU/status/1500612713231310851?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Mr Dooley said there will be much greater numbers fleeing the country over the coming weeks, and that appeals will have to go out to families across Europe, including Ireland, to open their homes.

"I have to say the response that I have gotten from people that have contacted me in the last week, there is a huge willingness by the Irish people to open up their homes and assist these people who are fleeing really a terrible situation," he told RTE.

Mr Dooley said he was invited by the Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky's Servant Of The People's party to visit the country after travelling to the border in Poland.

"What we saw on the other side of the border was a 20km tailback of cars.

"At one particular point, people standing in a line of about 5km," Mr Dooley added.

"I would say there were people there for probably two days.

"It's an appalling situation when you consider the low temperatures at night, recognising that they're vulnerable people, young families, an absence of men who are back on the warfront, elderly people being pushed on wheelchairs, people with physical disabilities being pushed on wheelchairs."

Mr Dooley defended his decision to cross the border into Ukraine against official advice from the Irish Government.

"I accept and recognise that.

"But I think in the face of such human suffering, it was a calculated risk from our perspective," he added.

"We had sought the advice of those that invited us and their best advice was that it was safe to travel to Lviv, which was about 100km on the other side of the border and was about 600 miles from where there was any shelling activity.

"We are preparing a report which will go to the Alde number parties.

"We'll be passing that message back, which is that at European level, they're very thankful for what's being done to date, but the effort will have to be stepped up, it will have to be easier for those that are fleeing the battlefields.

"It will have to be easier for them to cross the border.

"Obviously then we will have have work to do when the refugees ultimately get to our respective countries.

"Poland is doing well at the moment, managing the numbers that are there."

It comes as Ireland's Minister for Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney travels to New York for a two-day visit.

He is to take part in a Council of Foreign Relations discussion on Europe's response to the events in Ukraine.

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Government ‘considering all options’ to accommodate Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6649-YCC1-JBNF-W0G0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 10, 2022 Wednesday 3:39 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 548 words

**Byline:** Cate McCurry

**Highlight:** There are more than 4,000 refugees staying in student accommodation across the country.

**Body**

The Tanaiste said the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) is considering “all options” to find accommodation for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** as thousands will be moved out of student campuses over the coming weeks.

[*Leo Varadkar*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/leo-varadkar) said the government is doing its best to accommodate ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, with [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) taking in around 1% of Ukrainians who have fled the war.

There are more than 4,000 refugees staying in student accommodation across the country.

Asked what the government is doing to secure housing and rooms for those who will be moved out in the coming weeks, Mr Varadkar said it is “looking at all options”.

“We shouldn’t lose sight of the bigger picture here,” Mr Varadkar added.

“[*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) is at war. There’s a terrible war happening on our continent.

“Five million Ukrainians have been displaced from their homes.

“That’s roughly the entire population of the state and they’ve now been dispersed across Europe, and roughly 1% of them have come to Ireland.

“I believe we’ve an obligation to do our part and to do the best we can to accommodate those people as best we can.

“There isn’t a country in Europe that had 50,000 or 100,000 vacant properties in case of war happened.

“That’s just not how the world works.

“We’re doing the best we can to accommodate people as best we can in all sorts of different settings, whether it’s rented accommodation, whether it’s hotels and B&Bs, whether it’s modular accommodation, or whether it’s in people’s homes, and that’s what we’ll continue to do.”

Meanwhile, Mr Varadkar also said that the target of ending the direct provision system by the end of 2024 remains in place.

The system, set up more than 20 years ago, provides accommodation centres for asylum seekers and is run by for-profit companies.

That's part of the difficulty, and also it is important to bear in mind always that direct provision is not compulsory

Leo Varadkar

It has been heavily criticised by organisations including the UN, Amnesty International and the [*Council of Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/council-of-europe) in that time.

In February last year, the Government published its White Paper to replace the centres with an international protection system by 2024.

Mr Varadkar said the system is currently full and has been for a long time.

“There are actually a lot of people now in direct provision that have status in Ireland, but continued to live in direct provision because they haven’t moved out yet, they haven’t found somewhere to rent,” Mr Varadkar said.

“That’s part of the difficulty, and also it is important to bear in mind always that direct provision is not compulsory.

“Lots of people come to the country who claim asylum, now work, provide their own accommodation, stay with friends.

“It’s a service that the government offers.

“We’re trying to improve the quality of that all the time.

“The target remains to get to the situation where we replace direct provision with own-door accommodation in all cases, but that’s going to be difficult to achieve.

“That’s the truth of it.

“The fact that we’ve accommodated 40,000 or so people from Ukraine in the past few months, many more likely to come, makes it more difficult.

“If there is a country in the world that’s able to provide own-door self-catering accommodation for everyone who arrives within a few weeks, I don’t know where that country is.

“It’s a very difficult thing to achieve.”

**Load-Date:** August 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Tory MP accused of 'immoral and offensive bile' over Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YN-K471-JBNF-W06R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 10, 2022 Thursday 10:27 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 384 words

**Byline:** Sam Blewett

**Highlight:** Daniel Kawczynski said "British left-wing parties" are making "illiterate and immoral" demands for the UK to accept more people fleeing Vladimir Putin's invasion.

**Body**

A [*Conservative*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/conservative) MP has been accused by a senior colleague of spouting "utterly risible, illiterate, immoral and offensive bile" over ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

[*Daniel Kawczynski*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/daniel-kawczynski) said "[*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) left-wing parties" are making "illiterate and immoral" demands for the UK to accept more people fleeing Vladimir Putin's invasion.

The MP for [*Shrewsbury*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/shrewsbury) and Atcham argued that Britain should support Ukraine's neighbours because "Ukrainians will need to return home to rebuild their country" when the war is over.

But Simon Hoare, chairman of the Commons Northern Ireland Committee, told Mr Kawczynski he does "not speak for the Tory Party".

What utterly risible, illiterate immoral and offensive bile. Haven't you heard what [*@BorisJohnson*](https://twitter.com/BorisJohnson?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) has been saying? You do not speak for the Tory Party. I'm not sure you speak for humanity [*#whitehotfury*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/whitehotfury?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*https://t.co/l6O0Jla0OO*](https://t.co/l6O0Jla0OO) - Simon Hoare MP (@Simon4NDorset) [*March 10, 2022*](https://twitter.com/Simon4NDorset/status/1501797626706018304?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

In a 5.50 am tweet, Mr Hoare said: "What utterly risible, illiterate, immoral and offensive bile. Haven't you heard what @BorisJohnson has been saying?

"You do not speak for the Tory Party. I'm not sure you speak for humanity #whitehotfury."

The online dispute came as the Tories, and Home Secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) in particular, come under vast pressure to improve British efforts to help those fleeing the war.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson is resisting widespread calls, including from Kyiv, to drop visa requirements for Ukrainians, instead insisting security checks are needed to prevent the Russian president from sending agents to the UK.

Despite more than 2.1 million people fleeing Ukraine according to UN estimates, the latest figures from Downing Street say the UK has granted just 957 visas.

Against this backdrop, Mr Kawczynski tweeted: "British Left-wing parties demand Britain takes in more ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. This is illiterate and immoral.

"When war is over Ukrainians will need to return home to rebuild their country. We should be supporting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in frontline states like Poland & Romania."

Mr Kawczynski later deleted the tweet and blocked the Twitter account of the PA news agency journalist who reported on Mr Hoare's criticism.

In January, Mr Kawczynski was suspended from the Commons for a single day for undermining an apology he gave for bullying staff.

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees now living in UK tops 100,000*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:661P-85H1-JCS0-D07F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

July 29, 2022 Friday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 13

**Length:** 613 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

The number of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have been granted sanctuary in the UK since the start of Vladimir Putin's invasion has topped 100,000 for the first time, figures show. Government data released yesterday shows that 104,000 people have arrived in Britain under the country's two Ukrainian refugee programmes - 31,300 under the family scheme, and 72,700 under the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme.

The figures also show that, as of Tuesday, around 198,200 applications had been made for visas, and 166,200 visas had been issued. This leaves 32,000 people still waiting for decisions on their applications, and 62,200 who have been granted visas but are yet to arrive in the UK. The figures are considerably higher than the number of people who have come to the UK under other refugee schemes.

The Syrian resettlement scheme, which ended in 2021, welcomed 20,000 refugees, and the two schemes for Afghans - the Afghan relocations and assistance policy (ARAP) and the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme (ACRS) - have welcomed around 19,000 people so far, including those evacuated during Operation Pitting.

Robina Qureshi, executive officer at Positive Action in Housing, a charity that has been matching refugees and asylum seekers with hosts in the UK for decades, said she welcomed the high numbers. But she added: "Ukrainians aren't the only refugees. There's this narrative that they're the only legitimate ones, but there are many from other countries - Yemen, Syria, Iraq. And they have the threat of the Rwanda plan facing them.

"People arriving [via] the Channel are, in the main, refugees, either fleeing war or persecution, and they are left in limbo and fear. It's concerning that we are unable to help them. We hope that now that this model has been established, the government will look at Homes for Yemen, Homes for Syria, because there is no safe route for these people."

While the numbers granted sanctuary under the Ukrainian refugee schemes are relatively high, there are also concerns about the support people receive once they arrive. Data from a recent survey by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) shows that only 37 per cent of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** reported that they had enough money to support themselves and their dependents for the next three months.

Separate data, published by the government in June, showed that 660 households who have come to Britain via the Ukraine routes had been forced to register as homeless. The Independent revealed in May that thousands of Ukrainians seeking refuge in the UK had been forced to live in overcrowded accommodation, with whole families sharing single rooms.

Local authorities are given £10,500 in central government funding for each refugee under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, but receive no money for those arriving via the family route. Calls are mounting for councils to be given funding to support those arriving under the family scheme, and for the government to allow refugees on this scheme to be able to switch to the Homes for Ukraine route, which it pledged to do earlier this month.

Labour MP Clive Betts, who chairs the levelling up committee, wrote to the refugees minister last week demanding an update on when the government would fulfil its pledge to enable people to switch from the family scheme to the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Mr Betts said: "As a committee, we have heard of difficulties arising with the rematching process within the Homes for Ukraine scheme when accommodation is found to be unsuitable, and when there appears to be perverse application of the rules, with families unable to switch. Refugee families need a proper home, not a hotel bedroom or temporary bed and breakfast."

**Load-Date:** July 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees spending second Christmas in UK share hopes for 2024*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69Y2-WK61-JBNF-W337-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

December 24, 2023 Sunday 12:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 832 words

**Byline:** Danielle Desouza

**Highlight:** Anna Tysovska said she was ‘shocked’ to be spending a second festive period in the UK.

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have expressed their shock at spending their second Christmas in the UK and shared their hopes for 2024, including overcoming the trauma of war and building better lives for their children.

Earlier this year, Ukraine officially changed the day it celebrates Christmas from the [*Orthodox Church*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/orthodox-church) date of January 7 – as is traditional in Russia – to December 25, in a government move designed to distance themselves from their invaders.

Ukrainians living in the UK have said the move makes “complete sense” and will match their government’s plans, while others said they plan to have two celebrations.

Anna Tysovska, 33, arrived in the UK on April 1 2022 with her aunt and cousin from [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) – staying with a host family in [*Cornwall*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cornwall) before moving to their own home in London in August 2023.

“It feels so natural and, like, the right thing to do,” Ms Tysovska told the PA news agency ahead of their new celebration.

“But, I also know that a lot of people in Ukraine will still celebrate on January 7 just because it was how they used to do it.”

Ms Tysovska said she feels “shocked” to spend another Christmas in the UK and “guilty” thinking about her family back in her war-torn home country.

“I also feel slightly guilty because my dad is far away,” she added.

“People in Ukraine, they don’t have plans.

“[*Life*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/life) is going on because people need to continue with their lives because it’s too long of a period to stop everything, but they’re not living the lives they used to be.

“One day, I was talking to my dad and he said, ‘we just had an explosion 10km away’.”

She added it feels “painful” to think Ukrainians may be “forgotten” as the war continues.

Ms Tysovska said she and her family will have a Christmas dinner on December 24 and a full celebration on December 25.

As per Ukrainian tradition, their meal will consist of 12 dishes including a dumpling with a coin hidden inside.

“My favourite celebration is to have dumplings, which we cook, and put a coin inside one of them and whoever gets it will be happy the whole year,” she said.

“It’s exciting, but also people get nervous because they might break their teeth.”

Ms Tysovska hopes to use her time in the UK as an opportunity to pursue a psychology degree so she can help fellow Ukrainians with the trauma of the last two years.

“I just finished my Master’s degree in psychology and I want to find some work in this field and maybe apply for a PhD,” she said.

“When the war ends, people will be traumatised and I don’t think we understand now what that trauma will look like.

“So far, I know the trauma is horrible and we are a completely traumatised nation.

“I want to contribute somehow to Ukraine and bring something good from the British system to Ukraine.”

Yuliia Ruban and her son, Daniil, who is now eight, came to the UK on April 6 2022 from Melitopol in south-eastern Ukraine and stayed with Dr Poppy Gibson, a senior lecturer at Anglia Ruskin University, and her family in Benfleet, Essex.

Ms Ruban and her son then moved in with a different host family in Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, in October 2022.

The 30-year-old, who works as a sales consultant in a heating department at Lower Barn Farm, told PA she plans on having two festive celebrations.

“(On December 25), we will celebrate with our British family who is sponsoring us,” she said.

“Ukrainian Christmas is celebrated on January 7 and we have traditional dishes.

“The most important dish is a Kutia – porridge made from whole wheat grains with the addition of honey, sometimes with dried fruits, nuts, and poppy seeds.

“We have lots of Ukrainian friends here and I’m looking forward to visiting these friends, sing Christmas carols and enjoy these Ukrainian dishes.”

Since living in the UK, she said life has “changed 360 degrees”.

“I was looking for a job for up to five months to find a position that would suit me and when it was time to move out we were struggling with rent as I didn’t have six payslips,” she said.

“But we were blessed as a week before we would become homeless again, we had an offer from another family who offered us accommodation.

“Daniil came here without speaking any English and the Gibson family really helped him to integrate into society.

“I don’t really know how he feels because he’s not talking about trauma, but he had to leave everything behind – he left his room, his toys, his father, his grandparents and his life.”

Daniil told PA: “I play a lot of sports: swimming, tennis and judo; and I go to the best school and the school does a lot for me.”

As for her hopes for 2024, Ms Ruban said: “The biggest hope for next year is to know that the programme for Ukrainians will be continued and we will be able to build our lives here in the future.”

A [*National Audit Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/national-audit-office) (NAO) report in October found 131,000 Ukrainians had to come to the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme between March 18 2022 and August 28 2023, but questions remain over its long term Government funding and whether initial three-year visas for those involved will be extended.

**Load-Date:** December 23, 2023

**End of Document**



[*AN ALPINE RETREAT; A Swiss monastery in mega-wealthy Zug is playing host to 160 Ukrainian refugees, experiencing the sheer complexity of life having lost everything, discovers Paddy Dowling*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:697N-YN61-JCS0-D2HT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

September 24, 2023 Sunday

First Edition

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**Section:** THE NEW REVIEW; Pg. 28

**Length:** 694 words

**Byline:** PADDY DOWLING

**Body**

Zug, Switzerland's wealthiest canton, is famous for its flawless alpine vistas and low taxes. And here in the rolling hills sits Kloster Menzingen monastery, a temporary home to 160 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have fled their war-torn country.

"They were bombing my city last night," explains law graduate Hana, 28, from Odesa, as she walks along the gloomy corridor in the southern wing of the convent.

"This is our life, waking up to news that our towns and cities are once more under siege," she says.

The exclusive and perfectly manicured district, where one in eight of its residents is a millionaire, was by the end of July host to 2,333 refugees and asylum seekers from 55 different nationalities including 828 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Ukrainians in Switzerland have been granted asylum provisionally, to stay and work, under a fast-tracked permit 'S' status, reserved for people in need of special protection. However, when the war ends, they must return.

Notwithstanding, all residents at Kloster Menzingen will be uprooted once more to a repurposed modular facility, 12km away, which will provide shelter for up to 400 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

The wing at the monastery, which has been their spiritual sanctuary for more than a year, is closing for renovation and conversion into apartments.

Christian Murbach, at the Zug Cantonal Social Welfare Office, explains: "Renewing leases on existing facilities, or finding and or building new asylum accommodation in a tense housing market, is becoming increasingly difficult".

Living in Switzerland's Disneyland for the rich is expensive, even for those earning reasonable salaries. At the monastery, Ukrainians each receive around £175 social welfare per month - in addition to core expenses provided by the canton - explained they simply couldn't afford to buy anything.

Tatiana, who arrived in Switzerland from Odesa eight months pregnant, explains she could never have afforded the 'five-star' Swiss medical treatment she received when she gave birth to baby Viktoria. "The canton has been so kind and welcoming with all the children," she adds.

Menzingen monastery allocated a playroom solely for children, brightly decorated with six-foot-high cartoon murals.

And for those unaccompanied minors arriving into the canton from Afghanistan, they have been provided with a 30-bed alpine lodge on Mount Zugerberg, equipped with an open plan kitchen, gymnasium, games room and bedrooms, all with breathtaking views towards the snow-capped mountains of the Swiss Alps.

This is a stark contrast to the UK, where government ministers ordered the removal of child-friendly images in asylum centres for those children arriving unaccompanied, because they were "too welcoming".

Most governments across Europe, reeling after Covid, were caught off guard by the Ukrainian refugee crisis and the speed at which the 7.1 million people (UNHCR) spilled across porous borders.

And, despite being immensely well-heeled, cantons like Zug were no better prepared. They were challenged; logistically by a shortage of accommodation, and beneath the polished veneer of pleasantries in society, a very steep decline in public sympathy toward all refugees.

As the conflict drags on, well into its second year - even Murbach concedes "we are at a tipping point now with regards to support for the Ukraine crisis, and it's even worse for Afghanis and Syrians, for example".

This explains why; to plan, consult and build new asylum premises replacing existing ones like Steinhausen in Zug, where "non-***Ukrainian***" ***refugees*** still live six-to-a-room, can take six years.

With the global migrant crisis already having a profound impact on the European continent, and the next big flow an inevitability, regions like Zug are perhaps concerned - "if they build it, they [refugees] will come".

Hanna, from Odesa, was forced against her will by her family to leave her old life in Ukraine where she had everything and asked for nothing concludes: "I honestly don't know how I feel about anything anymore. I sit on my bed here shaking my head in disbelief thinking, I used to sit on my own bed watching Netflix in my own apartment, and in my own country. And now I am a refugee."

**Load-Date:** September 23, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Jill Biden lauds Romanian efforts to help Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65D1-WRR1-DY4H-K555-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 7, 2022 Saturday 11:07 AM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 397 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Jill Biden says the Romanian government and relief organizations are doing "amazing" work provided humanitarian relief to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who fled Russia's war against their country

**Body**

U.S. first lady [*Jill Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jill-biden) on Saturday praised the Romanian government and relief organizations for the range of humanitarian aid they are providing to Ukrainians who are fleeing Russia's war against their country. She called the show of solidary "amazing" but also "just the beginning."

Biden delivered her sober assessment at the conclusion of a nearly hourlong briefing at the U.S. Embassy in [*Bucharest*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bucharest) on the massive relief effort.

She was told that Romania had "welcomed" nearly 900,000 refugees from Ukraine since [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) invaded its neighbor on Feb. 24, but most have moved on to other countries. Women and children are the bulk of the refugees.

"It's amazing. It's solidarity here in Romania that you're all working together," Biden said. "I think this is really, unfortunately, just the beginning. Just the beginning."

She also applauded Romanians for their generosity.

"The Romanian people are amazing, to welcome all these refugees into their homes and offer them food and clothing and shelter and give them their hearts," she added. "I think the world knows that."

Around 7,000 Ukrainians cross the border and arrive in Romania daily, said Pablo Zapata, the Romanian representative for the U.N. refugee agency.

U.N. and other agencies and the Romanian government are providing refugees with a range of services, including food, shelter, education, health and mental health care, and counseling, among other services.

Biden asked specifically about the provision of mental health services and whether summer school was available to help refugee students catch up on their education.

The first lady was briefed as she opened the second day of a four-day trip to Romania and [*Slovakia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/slovakia) that was designed to showcase U.S. support for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. Slovakia also shares a border with Ukraine. Biden was scheduled to spend Sunday there meeting with refugees.

After the briefing, Biden met with Romanian first lady Carmen Iohannis over lunch at her private residence. Iohannis kept her job as an English teacher just like Biden kept hers.

Biden then was touring a school and meeting Ukrainian refugee students and their parents.

She was ending Saturday in Bratislava, Slovakia, in preparation for stops their Sunday to spend Mother's Day with refugees and visit a village on the border with Ukraine.

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Follow the AP's coverage of the war at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** May 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*New support centres open as more than 7,000 Ukrainian refugees arrive in Ireland*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6513-YS71-DY4H-K2KG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 17, 2022 Thursday 1:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 302 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** City centre hubs in Dublin, Cork and Limerick will help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** obtain PPS numbers and social welfare support.

**Body**

Ireland has issued more than 5,000 PPS numbers to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** since the war began, allowing them to work and access state support.

The country has also confirmed the opening of new support centres in three cities for refugees fleeing the conflict, which was sparked by the Russian invasion.

The Minister for Social Protection, Heather Humphreys, said on Thursday that three city centre hubs, in [*Dublin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dublin) , [*Cork*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cork) and [*Limerick*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/limerick) , will help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** obtain PPS numbers, social welfare support and give them access to other state services.

Ireland has already taken in more than 7,000 refugees since the war began.

The support centres in Dublin and Cork are already open, with the one in Limerick set to open next week.

Ms Humphreys said: "These dedicated hubs in Dublin, Cork and Limerick will ensure that Ukrainian families and individuals who have fled this terrible war can get the supports they need as quickly as possible."

"My officials are present in these new centres, as well as our Intreo Centres, to assist the Ukrainian people in obtaining the likes of a PPS number, which is a crucial first step to accessing different services offered by the state.

"Teams of staff from my department and the [*Department of Justice*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/department-of-justice) will be working over the Bank Holiday period, on Friday and Saturday, to assist the people from Ukraine arriving into Ireland with their immediate needs."

Justice Minister Helen McEntee said that the hubs will "provide new dedicated locations where we can ensure everyone entering the state, no matter which port of entry they arrive at, has an opportunity to receive their temporary permission letter, their PPS number and income supports".

She said that Ireland has granted temporary protection to more than 3,000 people, primarily through a reception facility at [*Dublin Airport*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dublin-airport).

**Load-Date:** March 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Campaign calls on hotels to offer Ukrainian refugees free rooms*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YP-7V11-JBNF-W2FM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 10, 2022 Thursday 2:55 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS & ADVICE,TRAVEL; Version:1

**Length:** 356 words

**Byline:** Helen Coffey

**Highlight:** Directory links people fleeing the war with free accommodation in countries around the world

**Body**

A campaign is calling on [*hotels*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hotels) around the world to host [***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) for free.

Hospitality for Ukraine has been set up to connect those fleeing the conflict with hospitality companies that are prepared to help.

The campaign organisers -marketing agency Stay the Night and content creator Kash Bhattacharya -have created a database where [*accommodation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/accommodation) providers can sign up.

"If you are a hotel, hostel or other accommodation provider that is able to pledge your support by providing rooms for refugees, please sign up," the website, [*hospitalityforukraine.com*](https://hospitalityforukraine.com/) , says.

The database can then be searched by organisations: "If you are an organisation working to support refugees fleeing the way in Ukraine, please click below to see our database of hospitality partners who can support your efforts," says Hospitality for Ukraine.

Refugees looking for somewhere to stay can contact accommodation providers directly using the contact details listed on their profiles.

Hospitality for Ukraine is not providing a booking service; users are advised to book with hospitality companies direct.

Accommodation is offered in 18 countries so far, including the UK, US, France, Austria, Greece and Turkey.

There are 20 options on offer in the UK for refugees. While several are in London, accommodation is also available in Birmingham, Derby, Cambridgeshire, Inverness and Norfolk, among others.

The campaign says it will "be carrying out a full PR campaign to promote Hospitality for Ukraine. We are also reaching out to a number of NGOs who are currently assisting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***."

Meanwhile, people have been attempting to [*get money to Ukrainians on the ground by booking Airbnbs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/airbnb-booking-ukraine-donate-b2030325.html) in the country that they have no intention of using.

Following influencers popularising the trend last week, a spokesperson for Airbnb confirmed that more than 61,000 nights had been booked in Ukraine on Wednesday and Thursday (2 and 3 March) alone, including 8,000 nights booked by UK users.

During the booking spree, UK customers were the second-biggest bookers after Americans, with Airbnb estimating that $1.9 million (£1.4m) had been transferred to Ukrainian hosts.

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees leave Calais hostel for visa application centre*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YG-FMJ1-JBNF-W1R1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 9, 2022 Wednesday 3:28 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 365 words

**Byline:** Ryan Hooper

**Highlight:** They were put on a waiting bus, accompanied by a heavy police presence.

**Body**

The first ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have left their temporary hostel accommodation in [*Calais*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/calais) amid chaotic scenes as their quest for safe passage to the UK remains mired in farce.

Several refugees clutching suitcases and other belongings were scrambled out of a back door of the Centre Europeen de Sejours in the [*French*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/french) port as local mayor [*Natacha Bouchart*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/natacha-bouchart) arrived to address the media in front of the building.

The refugees were put on a waiting bus, accompanied by a heavy police presence, bound for a visa application centre in [*Paris*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/paris) , Brussels or [*Lille*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lille).

A new "pop-up" facility is being opened in Lille, around 70 miles to the east of Calais, amid concern among politicians that smuggling gangs are targeting people in an area long associated with the migrant crisis.

However, there was no information about where to go for anyone making their own way to Lille's two main railway stations on Wednesday.

Indeed multiple staff members, including management, said they were unsure where to send any ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving on paid-for tickets, expecting to have their visa applications processed.

Omed Tahri, who had lived in Ukraine for 14 years before escaping when Russia invaded, told reporters outside the hostel where he and around 140 other refugees have been staying: "I don't know what is happening day to day.

"It is very complicated for me."

Mr Tahri, a translator who fled his home in Kharkiv to join his sister in East Ham, east London, was among those due to leave the hostel bound for Paris, having been told he has an appointment on Thursday morning.

The Afghan national, who is travelling with several members of his family, said: "We had a good job, a good business, now we have left everything.

"Now I have no money, no place to go.

"I hope they give us the visa ... we want to be a unit, all the family together."

The Home Office said the Lille visa centre's location will not be made public, prompting further concern about how refugees arriving in the French city will know where to go upon arrival.

Clare Moseley, founder of the Care4Calais charity, said: "The problem here is there is a lot of confusion and uncertainty.

"It is making the lives of upset people even more difficult."

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Jill Biden to meet Ukrainian refugees in Romania, Slovakia*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65BY-21T1-JBNF-W00P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 2, 2022 Monday 5:02 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 432 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** The White House has announced that Jill Biden will meet with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** during a trip to Romania and Slovakia later this week

**Body**

[*Jill Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jill-biden) will spend Mother's Day meeting with Ukrainian mothers and children who fled for their lives after Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) opened war against Ukraine, the [*White House*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/white-house) announced late Sunday.

The May 8 meeting will take place in Slovakia, one of two eastern European countries the first lady plans to visit during a five-day trip that starts Thursday. She also will be stopping in [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania).

The trip will mark Biden's latest show of solidarity with Ukraine.

Romania and Slovakia share borders with Ukraine, which has spent the past two months fighting off Russia's military invasion. Romania and Slovakia also are NATO members.

Nearly 5.5 million Ukrainians, mostly women and children, have fled Ukraine since Russia invaded its smaller neighbor on Feb. 24, according to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. Many have resettled in neighboring countries or relocated elsewhere in Europe.

Throughout the trip, Jill Biden will also meet with U.S. service members, U.S. Embassy personnel, humanitarian aid workers and educators, the White House said.

After arriving in Romania on Friday, she is scheduled to meet with U.S. service members at Mihail Kogalniceau Air Base, a U.S. military installation near the Black Sea.

The schedule then takes her to the Romanian capital of Bucharest on Saturday to meet with government officials, U.S. Embassy staff, humanitarian aid workers and educators who are helping teach displaced Ukrainian children. The first lady will travel to Slovakia to meet with staff at the U.S. Embassy in Bratislava.

On May 8, Jill Biden will travel to Kosice and Vysne Nemecke in Slovakia to meet with refugees, humanitarian aid workers, and local Slovakians who are supporting Ukrainian families who have sought refuge in Slovakia.

She plans to meet with members of Slovakia's government on May 9 before returning to the United States.

The trip will be the first lady's second overseas by herself, following her journey to Tokyo last year for the opening of the delayed 2020 Olympic Games. The trip also will mark her latest gesture of solidarity with Ukraine.

Four days after Russia's Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine, Biden appeared at a White House event wearing a face mask embroidered with a sunflower, Ukraine's national flower.

She also invited Ukraine's ambassador to the United States, Oksana Markarova, to sit with her during President Joe Biden's State of the Union address in March, and had a sunflower sewn into the sleeve of the blue dress she wore for the occasion.

President Biden visited with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** during a stop in Poland in March.

**Load-Date:** May 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Judge Rinder compares Ukraine refugee crisis to Second World War*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650X-SDK1-DY4H-K2G4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 16, 2022 Wednesday 6:52 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,TV & RADIO,CULTURE; Version:1

**Length:** 321 words

**Byline:** Sam Moore

**Highlight:** TV star is currently in Poland reporting on the conflict between Ukraine and Russia

**Body**

[*Judge Robert Rinder*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/judge-robert-rinder) has made comparisons between the Second World War and the[*ongoing conflict*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-latest-putin-zelensky-china-nato-b2035896.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine%20news%20-%20live:%20Kyiv%20must%20accept%20it%20will%20never%20join%20Nato,%20Zelensky%20says,%20as%20TV%20protester%20appears%20in%20court) between [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) and [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Stationed in the Polish town of Prezmyl to cover the conflict for ITV, Rinder also criticised the UK government for how they were processing refugees fleeing the war.

Speaking on [*Good Morning Britain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/good-morning-britain) , he said: "People should know what happened in the past or we're doomed to repeat it. I can tell GMB viewers and you that it is repeating itself."

The barrister then described the situation for refugees crossing the border from Ukraine into Poland and compared it to scenes from the Second World War.

"The trains arrive infrequently," he said. "When they do it is women, it is children, it is babies in mothers' arms. They arrive in wagons cheek to jowl, a sea of humanity with just very often one suitcase or the clothes on their back."

Rinder, whose Jewish grandparents fled to the UK during the Second World War, then praised the British public for opening up their homes to refugees.

"The British people are speaking up," said Rinder. "All they want is (for the Government) to deliver - and I am going to repeat this because it bears repetition - to deliver on the promises that they have made."

One mum told me that when the sirens sounded in Kyiv she 'pretended to her son that it was a game of hide and seek' She has just arrived in Poland. Her husband is left fighting. She doesn't know if she will see him again. Europe 2022. [*pic.twitter.com/2ex8U44FWt*](https://t.co/2ex8U44FWt) - Robert Rinder (@RobbieRinder) [*March 15, 2022*](https://twitter.com/RobbieRinder/status/1503716249246871558?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Rinder had previously called the British government's response to the refugee crisis a "national embarrassment" and said that the bureaucracy of trying to get people to safety was a "nightmare".

The TV star has also been posting regular updates on his social media, documenting people crossing the border and the many men taking their families to safety then going back to fight.

**Load-Date:** March 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Judge Rinder compares Ukraine refugee crisis to Second World War*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650S-M6T1-DY4H-K28C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 15, 2022 Tuesday 5:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,TV & RADIO,CULTURE; Version:1

**Length:** 321 words

**Byline:** Sam Moore

**Highlight:** TV star is currently in Poland reporting on the conflict between Ukraine and Russia

**Body**

[*Judge Robert Rinder*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/judge-robert-rinder) has made comparisons between the Second World War and the[*ongoing conflict*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-latest-putin-zelensky-china-nato-b2035896.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine%20news%20-%20live:%20Kyiv%20must%20accept%20it%20will%20never%20join%20Nato,%20Zelensky%20says,%20as%20TV%20protester%20appears%20in%20court) between [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) and [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

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**Load-Date:** March 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Squatters break into Russian oligarch's mansion 'to house Ukrainian refugees'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650H-T7G1-JBNF-W309-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 12:31 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 526 words

**Byline:** Rebecca Speare-Cole

**Highlight:** The group said they had 'liberated' the central London property belonging to Oleg Deripaska, who was sanctioned by the Government last week.

**Body**

Squatters have broken into a central [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london) mansion apparently owned by Russian oligarch [*Oleg Deripaska*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/oleg-deripaska) and declared it "belongs to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***".

At least five people have been occupying the property in Belgrave Square since early Monday morning.

Mr Deripaska, an industrialist who has had close links with the [*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) political establishment, was targeted with sanctions by the Government last week.

He was described as "a prominent Russian businessman and pro-Kremlin oligarch", who is "closely associated" with both the Russian government and President Vladimir Putin.

His wealth is estimated to be £2.3 billion and he has a multimillion-pound property portfolio in the UK which, according to a 2007 High Court judgment, includes the house at 5 Belgrave Square. Records indicate it has not changed hands since and is owned by an offshore British Virgin Islands company.

The squatters call themselves the London Mahknovists - after Nestor Makhno, who led an anarchist force that attempted to form a stateless society in Ukraine during the Russian Revolution of 1917-1923.

The building has been cordoned off and is surrounded by police officers and vehicles.

Three men stood on the balcony above the street, playing music, waving and dancing next to signs which read: "This property has been liberated" and "Putin go f\*\*\* yourself".

They all wore dark clothes and face coverings.

Answering reporters' questions, one of the men said there are five of them inside the mansion but they have a "way bigger group coming".

He added that they broke into the property at around 1am.

"We stay here until Putin stops the war," one man said.

He continued: "We have opened the building to house ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and refugees from all nations."

He also said the owner of the building "wants to destroy Ukraine homes".

"He supported the wars. This home belongs to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. There are families dying. Their land has gone. This is the least we can do."

Talking about finding housing for refugees, another said: "Priti Patel, do not worry. We did your job.

"Refugees welcome."

They said the [*UK Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk-government) have "failed" to properly respond to the invasion, adding: "The same money that funds the Russia war machine funds the Conservative Party."

The group also criticised the police, comparing them to those arresting protesters in Russia.

Asked how they got into the property, one joked: "Squatters' magic."

Another laughed: "I swear I cannot remember a thing."

One man said that inside the mansion "there is a lot of rooms. There is so much stuff that a normal human being shouldn't have."

Asked whether they have enough food and drink, one said: "This bastard left the basement full of alcohol but left no food.

"We have everything we need but we do not have food, so if anyone could provide us with food and we can lift it up with a rope, that would be really appreciated."

A Metropolitan [*Police*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/police) statement said: "Police were called shortly after 01.00 hours on Monday 14 March to a residential property in Belgrave Square, SW1.

"Officers attended and found that a number of people had gained entry and hung banners from upstairs windows.

"Officers remain at the location."

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Tory MP deletes Twitter account after claiming it would be 'immoral' to take more Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650R-8K01-DY4H-K0PH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 15, 2022 Tuesday 9:56 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 377 words

**Byline:** Jon Stone

**Highlight:** Daniel Kawczynski faced a furious backlash over the comments

**Body**

A Conservative MP has deleted his Twitter account following a backlash over comments he made about ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees).

[*Daniel Kawczynski*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/daniel-kawczynski) had said it would be "immoral and illiterate" for Britain to take in more Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion.

The Shrewsbury MP's view was widely criticised by furious members of the public, and he eventually deleted the post.

On Monday he told his local newspaper that Twitter was "not the platform for me".

Mr Kawczynski said he had used the social network for eight years but that it had "allowed a huge amount of denigration and disinformation".

"Careful press releases and the recording of Parliamentary debates is sufficient as I do not have confidence in Twitter," he [*told*](https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/politics/2022/03/14/shrewsbury-mp-daniel-kawczynski-deletes-twitter-after-row-over-ukrainian-refugee-post/) the Shropshire Star.

As of Tuesday morning his account was not visible on the social network.

The MP had originally caused the angry backlash by tweeting: "British left-wing parties demand Britain takes in more ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

"This is illiterate and immoral. When war is over Ukrainians will need to return home to rebuild their country.

"We should be supporting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in frontline states like Poland and Romania."

He has since claimed the post was misinterpreted. The MP was himself branded "immoral" over the original comments.

Mr Kawczynski is the latest in a string of Conservatives to cause outrage with comments about ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Last month immigration minister Kevin Foster faced calls to quit after appearing to suggest people fleeing the conflict could come to Britain on seasonal agricultural visas to pick fruit.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Government to start moving Ukrainian refugees in with Irish families*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651V-SRX1-DY4H-K3BY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 20, 2022 Sunday 7:28 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 391 words

**Byline:** Cate McCurry

**Highlight:** Around 20,000 offers of accommodation have been pledged by Irish people, including from Tanaiste Leo Varadkar.

**Body**

The [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) is to start the process of moving ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in with [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) families, Roderic O'Gorman said.

The Minister for Children said that vacant properties will be used first to house Ukrainians fleeing the war.

Around 20,000 offers of accommodation have been pledged by Irish people, including from Tanaiste [*Leo Varadkar*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/leo-varadkar).

Mr O'Gorman said that 9,000 Ukrainians have arrived in Ireland, and the vast majority are staying in hotels.

He also said that EU countries are expected to receive tens of thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the weeks ahead.

"It's certainly those numbers that we're preparing for," he added.

"We're continuing to look to book hotel accommodation to deal with short-term accommodation needs and as of this weekend, we've begun to draw down accommodation from the pledges provided by the Irish people.

"Over 20,000 offers have come in from Irish people across the country, a huge show of generosity, and my department are looking to start to activate some of those accommodation options now, starting initially with options of vacant housing."

Mr O'Gorman said the Government is looking to block-book hotels.

I think we have to be ready in case there's a sudden surge of people arriving at our ports and airports

Roderic O'Gorman, Minister for Children

"I think that's necessary to ensure that we have rooms for people when they arrive in the country and we've been doing that over the last two weeks," he added.

"I think we have to be ready in case there's a sudden surge of people arriving at our ports and airports and in a crisis situation like this."

Mr Varadkar and his partner Matt Barrett are among those who registered through the Irish Refugee Council.

Mr Varadkar said he has a spare room in his house.

"From our point of view, watching the news every night of Ukraine, it's very hard to watch what we're witnessing on our continent, in our neighbourhood and wanted to help out in some way," he said.

"Opening your home for a few months to somebody fleeing war, it's just something we're able to do at the moment. I'm happy to do."

He also said there has been some discussion in providing funding to those who open their homes to refugees, but is "not something we are going to do".

"What we're really saying to people is that this is an altruistic thing, not something we would intend to pay people to do," he added.

**Load-Date:** March 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Spanish ties provide safe havens for Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652F-HYH1-JBNF-W532-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 23, 2022 Wednesday 12:04 PM GMT

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**Length:** 807 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing bombs and bullets at home are fanning out across Western Europe

**Body**

As ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing bombs and bullets at home fan out across [*Western Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/western-europe) , few places they arrive feel as welcoming as a [*Spanish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/spanish) town known for years as "Little Ukraine."

Even before Russian tanks rolled into Ukraine last month, one in seven residents of Guissona was originally from there. Guissona's population more than doubled to around 7,500 residents, and drew in a lot of immigrant labor, including the Ukrainians, after a regional supermarket chain opened a distribution center nearby two decades ago.

More than 3.5 million people have already fled Russia's war in Ukraine. The refugees are finding safe havens in small communities on the continent where family and friends who went to find work have put down roots.

In Guissona, refugees aren't just staying with their relatives. Familiarity with the Ukrainian community bred local sympathy for the refugees' plight, and Spaniards are making room for them too.

Miquel Julia, a local businessman, had an empty apartment for sale in the town. He says he's made many Ukrainian friends in recent years, and when a local cousin of a Ukrainian refugee family asked him for help, he handed them the apartment until it's safe for them to go back home.

He couldn't turn a blind eye to the desperate refugees, he says.

"Bad times. Even more so when you see the state in which they arrive, and the stories they bring with them," he said.

He has lent his apartment to Alona Hrykun, a 44-year-old seamstress from [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) , who recently arrived with her teenage daughter and small son.

"My husband stayed behind in Kyiv. He is an ambulance driver and is helping move injured and sick people during the invasion," Hrykun said. "I am so proud of being Ukrainian."

Beside her husband, Hrykun left behind her mother and grandmother. Both were physically unable to make the trip of around 2,500 kilometers (1,500 miles) from one side of [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) to the other.

Authorities in Guissona, in northeast Spain's Catalonia region, have worked hard to avoid the creation of ghettos and to help foreign workers integrate into the community.

Many of the town's windows and balconies, including at the town hall, are currently draped with Ukrainian flags and antiwar posters and banners.

More than 200 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have arrived in Guissona so far. They are part of the around 25,000 who have sought refuge in Spain.

"They are getting our full support. They feel protected," says Guissona retiree Maria Angels Lopez, who is 67. "We all make the effort to help them and be with them. To stand in solidarity with them."

Every day since the onset of the war, dozens of locals and newly arrived refugees work at a Guissona warehouse filling boxes with food, medicines, clothes, blankets and toys to be sent to Ukraine.

Among the volunteers is Alina Slobodianiuk, who arrived here three days ago with her teenage son Maxim and daughter Yana.

They lived in the industrial Ukrainian city of Dnipro where she worked as a public relations specialist at a leading Ukrainian bank. Slobodianiuk is divorced and her ex-husband is a soldier.

She's left most of her family behind, including her parents, brother and sister. She says they're in contact every day, but that her family opted to stay in the hope that the war will end soon.

"It wasn't an easy decision. Because I love my country. I really love Ukraine," Slobodianiuk said. "But I am afraid for my kids."

The Spanish government was one of the first to adopt special European Union measures in response to the wave of refugees.

Among the temporary measures, refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine are given temporary residency and work permits within 24 hours.

Refugees also have access to public health care, discounted medicine and free schooling, among other benefits.

Just over 115,000 Ukrainian citizens were living in Spain last year, according to the 2021 census.

The web of contacts through Ukrainian immigrants is working elsewhere in Europe too.

In a village in Italy's Apennine Mountains, an hour's drive from Rome, two Ukrainian women who fled with their small children have found peace thanks to family ties and a local couple.

Tania, 30, and Katia, 33, fled the Ukrainian city of Lviv a few days after the outbreak of the war, leaving their husbands behind. They are the daughter and daughter-in-law of Halyna, a Ukrainian carer who lives in the village of Belmonte Sabino.

Halyna used to look after the mother-in-law of a local hotel owner, and he is now putting up the two women and their children.

"We are really happy. The Italian people have a big heart," said Tania, who said she was grateful to the inhabitants of Belmonte Sabino, all of whom they now consider friends.

The Ukrainian women asked that their last names not be used, for fear of reprisals against family in their home country.

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Barry Hatton in Lisbon, Portugal, contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** March 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[*New York orders Russia sanctions, invites Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WC-XD31-DY4H-K1RM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 27, 2022 Sunday 10:17 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 300 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** New York Gov. Kathy Hochul has signed an executive order forbidding her state from doing business with Russia, including cancelling its investments there

**Body**

[*New York*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/new-york) Gov. [*Kathy Hochul*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kathy-hochul) signed an executive order Sunday forbidding her state from doing business with [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , including cancelling its investments there.

The governor also said New York will welcome ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in response to Russia's invasion, noting at a press conference in [*Albany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/albany) that her state is home to the largest Ukrainian population in the U.S.

"We have said we'll open up our hearts, our homes, our resources to the people of the Ukraine, to say, 'We stand with you,'" Hochul said. Federal estimates show that around 140,000 of the more than 1 million people in the U.S. who report Ukrainian ancestry live in New York.

"If you need a place to stay, you want to come over here, we will help you become integrated into our community," she said, "as we have been open so to so many other refugees in the past, including those from Afghanistan most recently."

Hochul didn't immediately get into specifics regarding her state's economic sanctions against Moscow, but pointed out that New York's economy is larger than that of Russia.

The governor's executive order means the state "will not permit its own investment activity, whether directly or indirectly, to aid Russia as it commits these human rights violations and atrocities."

Ukraine filed a case at the United Nations' highest court accusing Russia of planning genocide.

"We strongly condemn the action of Putin and Russia for this unprovoked attack which is now leading to atrocities against innocent human beings, and that is not tolerable," Hochul said.

New York's sanctions follow those issued by President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) last week targeting Russia's financial system. Biden said the U.S. will block assets of large Russian banks, impose export controls aimed at the nation's high-tech needs and sanction its business oligarchs.

**Load-Date:** February 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Wimbledon hand out hundreds of free tickets to Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65S3-K7T1-JBNF-W0FP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 23, 2022 Thursday 5:07 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 282 words

**Byline:** Benedict Smith

**Highlight:** Merton has taken at least 400 Ukrainians, while more than 100 local families have opened their doors for those fleeing the war.

**Body**

[*Wimbledon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wimbledon) organisers have handed out hundreds of free tickets to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in a bid to welcome them to their new homes.

The tickets were presented at an afternoon tea held in Merton, south-west London, for the borough’s recent arrivals and their host families.

Food included the classic Wimbledon dish strawberries and cream, while white, green and purple bunting was draped from the ceiling in the tournament’s distinctive colours.

The tables were decorated with tennis balls, which were taken by two young boys to bounce on their miniature racquets.

Slawek Szczepanski, chief executive of the Polish Family Association – which organised the event, was impressed by the resilience of the refugees.

“Those people came a few weeks ago, totally shattered, and now they’re able to join us for tea,” he said.

“They left the country with nothing, they needed to go, they don’t have anything to go back to, they don’t know if their family’s still alive.

“That kind of trauma is an awful experience, and seeing them now overcoming those issues and trying to fit in, it’s amazing.”

Merton has taken at least 400 Ukrainians, while more than 100 local families have opened their doors for those fleeing the war.

In a couple of weeks, the refugees will be able to spend the day at No.1 Court – a chance to see some “amazing tennis”, according to Wimbledon Foundation head Paige Murphy.

She added: “It’s an incredibly proud moment for us – it’s really part of our mission… to give people a really special experience after a really traumatic few months.

“To be able to provide a unique day when they can hopefully have a bit of respite and really get some enjoyment out of it is incredibly inspiring for us.”

**Load-Date:** June 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[*The Independent's petition to help Ukrainian refugees surpasses 200,000 signatures*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650K-4KC1-JBNF-W1YF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 8:51 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:7

**Length:** 621 words

**Byline:** Andy Gregory

**Highlight:** Hundreds of thousands urge UK government to be at forefront of efforts to help those fleeing war

**Body**

A petition set up by [*The Independent*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/independent) calling for greater help for Ukrainians seeking refuge from Vladimir Putin's invasion has surpassed 200,000 signatures.

With the war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) now in its 19th day, the United Nations estimates that 2.8 million people have left the country, many fleeing Russian bombing that has hit residential buildings, kindergartens and hospitals.

Having reported from Ukraine's western borders in the early days of the conflict as hundreds of thousands of people sought to cross into safety, our international correspondent Bel Trew created a [*petition*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) urging the UK government to be at the forefront in answering their pleas for the world to help.

To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition, [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees)

The petition calls for urgent help in two ways.

It insists that the government must provide more supplies of food, clothing and shelter to care for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** - to be sent to countries that neighbour Ukraine to help those who have been forced to abandon their homes.

In line with The Independent's renewed [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugees-fund-donate-aid-b2025666.html%22%20title=%22Donate%20to%20our%20Refugees%20Welcome%20fund%20to%20help%20the%20people%20of%20Ukraine) campaign, first set up during the war in Syria in 2015, the petition also urges the UK government to do more to make the UK a safe haven for refugees and to ensure we take in Ukrainians who want to find safety here.

By Monday evening, more than 200,000 people had put their name to these demands.

The milestone was surpassed shortly after it emerged that - less than an hour after the launch of a [*new sponsorship scheme*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/homes-for-ukraine-refugees-government-sponsor-b2035528.html%22%20title=%22Government%20website%20for%20Ukraine%20sponsorship%20scheme%20goes%20down%20within%20minutes%20of%20going%20live) - more than 1,500 people in the UK had signed up to host a Ukrainian family in their home.

Following much criticism of the government's response to the unfolding humanitarian crisis, with Boris Johnson refusing to ease visa requirements for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** as every EU country has done, housing secretary Michael Gove on Monday unveiled the new [*"Homes for Ukraine" scheme*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/homes-for-ukraine-michael-gove-b2035607.html%22%20title=%22Homes%20for%20Ukraine:%20Michael%20Gove%20unveils%20UK%20scheme%20for%20fleeing%20refugees).

Under the programme, sponsored Ukrainians will be granted three years' leave to remain in the UK, with entitlement to work and access public services. The government will work with charities, faith groups and universities to match potential hosts with people from Ukraine.

Experts accused the government on Sunday of having initially "misread the public mood about ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***", after an Ipsos [*poll for The Independent*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/asylum-seekers-ukraine-borders-bill-b2034061.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine:%20Three%20in%20four%20back%20giving%20refuge%20to%20those%20fleeing%20war%20as%20ministers%20'misread%20public%20mood'%20on%20asylum%20system) found that three in four Britons backed giving refuge to those fleeing war or persecution.

In evidence of the levels of support for the Ukrainian plight, [*a campaign*](https://www.gofundme.com/f/refugeeswelcome) set up by The Independent has raised more than £135,000 so far, having [*surpassed £100,000 in under a week*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-refugees-welcome-campaign-donate-b2029237.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine%20war:%20Refugees%20Welcome%20campaign%20raises%20more%20than%20£100,000%20in%20under%20a%20week).

It was announced that from 3 March all new funds would go to the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal, which brings together 13 leading UK aid charities providing support overseas, including the Red Cross and Save the Children, whose efforts donations had supported up to that point.

And every donation from our readers to the DEC appeal [*will be matched pound-for-pound by the UK government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/refugees-welcome-ukraine-appeal-donations-b2027473.html) , up to £20m.

While Ukrainian and Russian officials are engaged in peace talks, the war shows little sign of slowing, and the scale of suffering in Ukraine continues to grow - with the UN confirming on Monday that 636 civilians have been killed so far in the invasion of Ukraine, and a further 1,125 injured.

Most of these casualties were caused by the use of explosive weapons with a wide impact area, the UN's human rights commissioner's office said.

The actual numbers are believed to be considerably higher, with hundreds of further civilian casualties alleged in recent days [*in Mariupol*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/mariupol-ukraine-russia-bombardment-hell-b2034526.html%22%20title=%22'A%20living%20hell':%20Inside%20the%20besieged%20city%20of%20Mariupol,%20where%20residents%20struggle%20to%20survive%20Russia's%20onslaught) , and in the Kharkiv and Donetsk regions.

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Tory MP says it would be 'immoral' for Britain to take more Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YH-FBX1-JBNF-W4KX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 9, 2022 Wednesday 9:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 541 words

**Byline:** Jon Stone

**Highlight:** Daniel Kawczynski said people fleeing the conflict should stay in 'front line' states

**Body**

It would be "immoral and illiterate" for Britain to take in more ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) , a Conservative MP has claimed.

[*Daniel Kawczynski*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/daniel-kawczynski) , the MP for Shrewsbury, said people fleeing the conflict should remain in "front line" states and not travel to the UK for their own good.

It comes amid increasing pressure on Britain to fall into line with the rest of Europe and welcome more people fleeing Vladimir Putin's invasion.

EU countries have introduced an open-door policy and given all Ukrainian nationals access to housing and assistance - but Britain is requiring Ukrainians to apply for visas, with some conditions relaxed.

Just 300 visas were granted by the UK as of Monday, at a time when neighbouring Ireland had already admitted 1,800 people despite being remote from the warzone.

The government says it will open a new channel for people to travel to Britain in the coming days - but on Wednesday night Mr Kawczynski defended the current strict approach and claimed rejecting refugees would be better for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) in the long run.

"British left-wing parties demand Britain takes in more ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***," he said in a message posted on social media.

"This is illiterate and immoral. When war is over Ukrainians will need to return home to rebuild their country.

"We should be supporting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in frontline states like Poland and Romania."

Benali Hamadache, migration spokesperson for the Green Party of England and Wales said: "The only immoral thing is this tweet", referring to Mr Kawczynski's comment.

The Shrewsbury MP is the latest Tory to cause outrage with comments about ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. Last month immigration minister Kevin Foster faced calls to quit after appearing to suggest people fleeing the conflict could come to Britain on seasonal agricultural visas to pick fruit.

Mr Kawczynski last hit the headlines in January after it emerged he had spent £22,000 of public money on taxpayer-funded Polish lessons.

In 2019 the Warsaw-born MP have claimed he was an "almost fluent Polish speaker". He defended the expenditure and said MPs were encouraged to "undertake various types of training".

The month before Mr v Kawczynski had come to media attention after leaked WhatsApp messages showed him pleading for as second job with a Saudi Arabian company in order to pay private school fees.

In his pitch to a fixer he described himself as the most "pro-Saudi" member of parliament and claimed "Saudi has no better friend in UK than me".

In another message he asked for "good renumeration", adding: "I need it to pay school fees!"

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*EXPLAINER: How US is expanding aid to Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652V-9PJ1-JBNF-W074-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 25, 2022 Friday 5:12 AM GMT

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**Length:** 781 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** The United States is expanding efforts to help refugees fleeing Ukraine after Russia invaded

**Body**

The United States is expanding efforts to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. It has agreed to accept up to 100,000 people escaping from the war and to increase support for [*Eastern European*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/eastern-european) nations that have taken in most of the people fleeing Russian forces. It's a modest number relative to the need, with an estimated 3.6 million refugees and millions more displaced within Ukraine. It's also modest by historical standards, far less than the number who came from Southeast Asia decades ago.

A look at the situation:

WHAT WAS ANNOUNCED?

While in Brussels to meet with European allies, President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) said the United States would admit up to 100,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and provide $1 billion in humanitarian assistance to countries affected by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The financial support is important because most of the approximately 3.6 million refugees who have fled Ukraine are in neighboring countries such as [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , Moldova, and Romania and are posing a substantial burden.

"This is not something that Poland or Romania or Germany should carry on their own," said Biden, who said he hopes to meet with refugees on his European trip. "This is an international responsibility."

The White House has said for weeks that the U.S. would welcome ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** at some point, so the announcement wasn't a surprise. Officials have said, and continue to maintain, that most of the refugees want to remain in Europe because they have family there and can more easily return home once it's safe.

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WHO IS COMING, WHEN AND WHERE WILL THEY GO?

Among the first Ukrainians refugee coming to the U.S. will be those who have family already in the United States, Biden said at a news conference.

U.S. refugee efforts will also focus on helping refugees who are considered particularly vulnerable following the Russian invasion, groups that include LGBTQ people, those with medical needs as well as journalists and dissidents, according to administration officials, who spoke to journalists on condition of anonymity to discuss the plan before the public announcement.

The administration did not provide a timeline but it's typically a lengthy process and the officials said all 100,000 may not necessarily arrive this year. Most of the refugees probably will settle in parts of the U.S. that already have large concentrations of Ukrainians. Such areas include the New York City area, Pennsylvania, Chicago and Northern California.

\_\_\_

IS THAT A LARGE NUMBER OF REFUGEES?

Not relative to the need, considering the number who have already fled Ukraine and the millions more who are displaced within the country.

It's also not large by historic standards. The U.S. took in more than 200,000 refugees, mostly from Southeast Asia, in 1980 alone. The total between 1975-1981 was more than 735,000, according to State Department figures. Since August, when the U.S. withdrew from Afghanistan, the U.S. has admitted more than 76,000 Afghans, including large numbers of former military interpreters and their families.

The administration, in consultation with Congress, set the annual cap of refugees for the 2022 budget year at 125,000, a total that does not include the evacuated Afghans. The administration says it does not immediately plan to seek to raise the cap because many of the Ukrainians can be brought to the U.S. under humanitarian parole or family reunification programs that are not counted against this cap.

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WHAT HAS BEEN THE REACTION?

Refugee advocates had been urging the administration to expedite admissions following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. That's even as refugee resettlement agencies were struggling because of program cuts under President [*Donald Trump*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/donald-trump) , whose administration slashed the refugee admissions cap to a historic low of 15,000.

Advocates welcomed Thursday's announcement, as did members of members of Congress with large Ukrainian populations in their districts, such as New Jersey Democratic Rep. Bill Pascrell.

"Until today, the rate of Ukraine refugee acceptance by our nation has lacked urgency," he said. "But this morning's announcement by the Biden administration to accept 100,000 refugees from Ukraine has the urgency that is essential for this dark moment."

There seems to be public support as well.

The vast majority of Americans --82% --say they favor providing humanitarian support to refugees from Ukraine, according to a poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. A smaller but still wide majority, 67%, say they favor accepting refugees from Ukraine into the U.S. Just 13% are opposed while another 21% say they hold neither opinion.

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Associated Press polling writer Hannah Fingerhut contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** March 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees will be able to apply for UK visas in Lille - Truss*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y8-9FM1-JBNF-W406-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 2:13 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 419 words

**Byline:** Flora Thompson

**Highlight:** Foreign Secretary Liz Truss told MPs about the 'pop-up' site in the city in northern France after the Government's resettlement policy was criticised.

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** will be able to apply for UK visas at another processing centre being set up in [*Lille*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lille) , according to the Foreign Secretary.

[*Liz Truss*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liz-truss) told MPs about the "pop-up" site in the city in northern France after the Government's resettlement policy for fleeing war-torn Ukraine was branded "cruel and chaotic".

In the House of Commons on Tuesday, Labour MP [*Diane Abbott*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/diane-abbott) (Hackney North and Stoke Newington) asked: "Will the Foreign Secretary speak to her colleague the Home Secretary about the cruel and chaotic way that desperate ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are being treated by her department?

"It cannot be right that there is no visa application centre in [*Calais*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/calais) and ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who travel thousands of miles to Calais are being redirected to either Paris or Brussels. Does the Foreign Secretary agree that this brings the UK into disrepute?"

Ms Truss replied: "The Home Office have placed staff in Poland and Hungary to help people, they have also ... the Home Secretary has announced a new pop-up application site in Lille.

"I can tell her that the Home Office has set up a surgery for MPs in Portcullis House which I am sure she will be very welcome to take any cases she has to."

It comes after Home Secretary Priti Patel told MPs on Monday: "I can confirm that we have set up a bespoke VAC en route to Calais but away from the port because we have to prevent that surge taking place."

But she later told the Commons the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) is still "setting up" the visa application centre (VAC), adding that there was a need to avoid creating "choke points" in Calais and instead "encourage a smooth flow of people", as concerns were raised over Ukrainians being turned away from the French port city.

A Downing Street spokesman said the centre was "en route to Calais" and "the Home Office are working quickly to set it up and we expect it to be set up in the coming days".

Asked why it was not being set up in Calais, where Ukrainians had already gathered, the spokesman said: "We obviously want to make sure that we can provide the appropriate level of support that those who are seeking to enter the UK require.

"Obviously the Home Office and Border Force are best placed to make a call on where that would be best based to help support those people who are making their way through France."

Asked what Ukrainians already in Calais should do, the spokesman said the new application centre would be set up shortly, "there is a helpline in place" and "facilities and staff in neighbouring countries to Ukraine".

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees to mark Grade II listing of Second World War cross*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6600-0J31-DY4H-K1MS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 21, 2022 Thursday 12:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 452 words

**Byline:** Ellie Iorizzo

**Highlight:** The cross serves as a reminder of the impact of war on displaced communities throughout history.

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** living in the UK will mark the confirmation of Grade II-listed status for a Second World War-era Ukrainian Cross which represents “Britain’s solidarity with the Ukrainian people”.

The cross is being granted listed status to recognise its significance as a symbol of Ukrainian gratitude for refuge in [*Cornwall*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cornwall) following the war.

Refugees from Ukrainian cities including Kharkov, [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) and [*Lviv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lviv) will meet with dignitaries from the UK and Ukraine at the site of the cross in Mylor Bridge in Cornwall.

Deputy ambassador of Ukraine to the UK, Taras Krykun, and UK Heritage Minister [*Nigel Huddleston*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nigel-huddleston) will both visit the landmark on Thursday.

Mr Huddleston said: “This poignant Ukrainian Cross is an important symbol of Britain’s solidarity with the Ukrainian people.

“Just as we welcomed those fleeing Soviet Russia 75 years ago, the whole country stands alongside Ukrainians escaping the atrocities of Putin’s illegal war today.”

Following the Second World War, hundreds of displaced Ukrainians found themselves in Cornwall after fleeing violent persecution by the communist regime installed in their home country by the Soviet army.

A year after their arrival, the ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** built a cross near to their hostel as a symbol of their gratitude for refuge and also of their strong faith.

On June 7 1948, three Roman Catholic priests blessed the cross, which bears the inscription: “This symbol of faith in God was erected by Ukrainians who escaping from Russian communists found refuge in England 7 June 1948.”

It serves as a reminder of the impact of wars on displaced communities throughout history.

The Grade II listing comes as the UK has welcomed more than 95,000 Ukrainians following Russia’s invasion, according to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

Vadym Prystaiko, ambassador of Ukraine to the United Kingdom, said: “The United Kingdom has been unwavering in its support and welcome for the people of Ukraine and we are thankful it continues to stand shoulder to shoulder with us.

“The Grade II listing of this cross is a beautiful gesture of companionship and support at a time when a new generation of Ukrainians are being forced to seek refuge in the UK.”

Refugees Minister Lord Harrington said: “As the people of Cornwall open up their communities to Ukrainians, we can today cement their special place in our shared history with this cross – a symbol of our solidarity and a sombre reminder of the cost of war.”

Duncan Wilson, chief executive of [*Historic England*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/historic-england) , added: “The Ukrainian Cross is a poignant reminder of the human cost of war and the lives lost and displaced. It is a simple reflection of gratitude for safe refuge and fully deserves to be listed.”

**Load-Date:** July 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Plan for 500 modular homes to help house Ukrainian refugees arriving in Ireland*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65TC-B7V1-JBNF-W3H6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 29, 2022 Wednesday 5:24 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 391 words

**Byline:** David Young

**Highlight:** The pilot programme will cost 100 million euro.

**Body**

Five hundred modular homes are to be installed in around 20 sites across [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) to help efforts to house ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

The two-bedroom units provided under a 100 million euro Government pilot initiative will be able to accommodate 2,000 people.

It is expected that the first of the units will be in place by November.

Tens of thousands of Ukrainians have arrived in Ireland since the outbreak of war in their homeland in February.

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage is working on identifying the sites for the homes. The units will all be sited on public land in urban areas. It is anticipated each site will house between 20 to 60 units.

The roll-out of the programme will be managed by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) and the Office of Public Works. They will be involved in site preparation and the acquisition and installation of the modular units.

Installation work on the 500 homes is due to be completed by next year – a timeframe described as “ambitious, but achievable” by the Government.

Under the plan, Housing Minister Darragh O’Brien will provide required planning exemptions to enable the OPW and its agents to access relevant sites immediately. The DCEDIY will then take responsibility for ownership of the modular units and their future use.

Children’s Minister Roderic O’Gorman said the move was an “emergency” response to the refugee crisis.

He said a significant number of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** were currently housed in student accommodation and he said that would have to be freed up ahead of the start of the new academic year in September.

He added that many refugees are being moved into accommodation pledged by members of the public over the summer.

“We saw today further attacks on civilian areas in Ukraine, we have to recognise that there will continue to be families who make the decision, the incredibly understandable decision, that they are safer outside of the country,” he said.

“So, it’s likely that Ireland and other EU member states will continue to see Ukrainians arriving seeking shelter and seeking safety and Ireland will continue to make all efforts to meet those needs, though recognising that with the pressures that sometimes the standard accommodation we provide is going to be lower than perhaps we provided at the start of the crisis.”

**Load-Date:** June 29, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees helped push German population up 1.3% last year*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68H8-0971-DY4H-K4VV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 20, 2023 Tuesday 9:40 AM GMT

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**Length:** 240 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Official statistics in Germany show that large numbers of refugees from Ukraine fleeing Russia's war fueled a 1.3% rise in the German population last year

**Body**

Large numbers of refugees from Ukraine fleeing [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's war fueled a 1.3% rise in Germany's population last year, helping push up the number of inhabitants in the [*European Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/european-union) 's most populous country to more than 84.4 million, official statistics showed Tuesday.

Germany's population expanded by 1.12 million in 2022, the Federal Statistical Office said. That compared with an increase of just 0.1%, or 82,000 people, the previous year.

All of Germany's 16 states saw their populations increase. The largest proportional increases were in the country's two biggest cities, [*Berlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/berlin) and [*Hamburg*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hamburg) , which both saw rises of 2.1%.

At the end of last year, Germany was home to 12.3 million people with only foreign citizenship, the statistics office said. Of those, 1.34 million Turkish citizens — a substantial minority in the country for decades — made up the biggest single group.

There were also 1.05 million Ukrainians, an increase of 915,000 compared with 2021; and 883,000 Syrians, an increase of 48,000.

Overall, the number of foreign citizens living in Germany was up 1.4 million, while the number of German nationals declined by 309,000, largely because there were more deaths than births. As a result, the proportion of the population without German citizenship rose from 13.1% to 14.6%.

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Follow the AP’s coverage of migration issues at [*https://apnews.com/hub/migration*](https://apnews.com/hub/migration) and Russia's war in Ukraine at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** July 20, 2023

**End of Document**



[*EXPLAINER: How U.S. is expanding aid to Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652P-H1F1-DY4H-K095-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 24, 2022 Thursday 6:58 PM GMT

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**Length:** 750 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** The United States is expanding efforts to help refugees fleeing Ukraine after Russia invaded

**Body**

The United States is expanding efforts to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. It has agreed to accept up to 100,000 people escaping from the war and to increase support for [*Eastern European*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/eastern-european) nations that have taken in most of the people fleeing Russian forces. It's a modest number relative to the need, with an estimated 3.5 million refugees and millions more displaced within Ukraine. It's also modest by historical standards, far less than the number who came from [*Southeast Asia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/southeast-asia) decades ago.

A look at the situation:

WHAT WAS ANNOUNCED?

While in Brussels to meet with European allies, President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) said the United States would admit up to 100,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and provide $1 billion in humanitarian assistance to countries affected by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The financial support is important because most of the approximately 3.5 million refugees who have fled Ukraine are in neighboring countries such as Poland, Moldova, and Romania and are posing a substantial burden.

The White House has said for weeks that the U.S. would welcome ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** at some point, so the announcement wasn't a surprise. Officials have said, and continue to maintain, that most of the refugees want to remain in Europe because they have family there and can more easily return home once it's safe.

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WHO IS COMING, WHEN AND WHERE WILL THEY GO?

Among the first Ukrainians refugee coming to the U.S. will be those who have family already in the United States, Biden said at a news conference.

U.S. refugee efforts will also focus on helping refugees who are considered particularly vulnerable following the Russian invasion, groups that include LGBTQ people, those with medical needs as well as journalists and dissidents, according to administration officials, who was not authorized to publicly discuss the details before their public release and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The administration did not provide a timeline but it's typically a lengthy process and the officials said all 100,000 may not necessarily arrive this year. Most of the refugees probably wil settle in parts of the U.S. that already have large concentrations of Ukrainians. Such areas include the New York City area, Pennsylvania, Chicago and Northern California.

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IS THAT A LARGE NUMBER OF REFUGEES?

Not relative to the need, considering there are about 3.5 million who have fled Ukraine and millions more who are displaced within the country.

It's also not large by historic standards. The U.S. took in more than 200,000 refugees, mostly from Southeast Asia, in 1980 alone. The total between 1975-1981 was more than 735,000, according to State Department figures. Since August, when the U.S. withdrew from Afghanistan, the U.S. has admitted more than 76,000 Afghans, including large numbers of former military interpreters and their families.

The administration, in consultation with Congress, set the annual cap of refugees for the 2022 budget year at 125,000, a total that does not include the evacuated Afghans. The administration says it does not immediately plan to seek to raise the cap because many of the Ukrainians can be brought to the U.S. under humanitarian parole or family reunification programs that are not counted against this cap.

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WHAT HAS BEEN THE REACTION?

Refugee advocates have urged the administration to expedite refugee processing even before Russia invaded Ukraine. That's even as refugee resettlement agencies were struggling because of cuts under President [*Donald Trump*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/donald-trump) , whose administration slashed the refugee admissions cap to a historic low of 15,000.

Advocates welcomed Thursday's announcement, as did members of members of Congress with large Ukrainian populations in their districts, such as New Jersey Democratic Rep. Bill Pascrell.

"Until today, the rate of Ukraine refugee acceptance by our nation has lacked urgency," he said. "But this morning's announcement by the Biden administration to accept 100,000 refugees from Ukraine has the urgency that is essential for this dark moment."

There seems to be public support as well.

The vast majority of Americans --82% --say they favor providing humanitarian support to refugees from Ukraine, according to a poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. A smaller but still wide majority, 67%, say they favor accepting refugees from Ukraine into the U.S. Just 13% are opposed while another 21% say they hold neither opinion.

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Associated Press writer polling writer Hannah Fingerhut contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** March 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Almost 600 Ukrainian refugees granted visas to come to Northern Ireland*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65BC-9841-JBNF-W137-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 29, 2022 Friday 6:05 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 423 words

**Byline:** Rebecca Black

**Highlight:** The total number of refugees who have arrived in Northern Ireland is not known, with many arriving at Dublin Airport.

**Body**

Almost 600 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have received visas to come to [*Northern Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/northern-ireland).

The total number of refugees who have arrived in the region is not currently known, with many arriving at [*Dublin Airport*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dublin-airport) and crossing the land border.

However, some 598 visas have been issued to applicants sponsored by Northern Ireland residents under the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine scheme.

The figures, up to April 26, show most (95) visa sponsors are in [*Belfast*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/belfast) , while there are 90 each in the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon and Newry, Mourne and Down council areas.

Four centres where refugees can get assistance have been set up in Belfast, Newry, Craigavon and Ballymena.

They include advice on the health service, schools and housing.

The Red Cross are also providing knitted Trauma Teddies for arriving children.

Some 250 refugees have attended the centres over the last two weeks.

Ian Snowden, head of the Ukrainian Refugee Support Team in Northern Ireland, said there has been a huge response in the region.

He said more than 6,000 people have registered their interest on the Homes for Ukraine website to take in a refugee, which is more than double the region's proportion of the UK's population share for the scheme.

Around 1,000 Ukrainian people have applied to come to Northern Ireland through the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Mr Snowden said officials believe around 90% of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Northern Ireland have come through Dublin Airport.

"As a consequence of that it is very difficult for us to know who has arrived and when they have arrived," he said.

He said there is no upper limit on the number of Ukrainians who could come to Northern Ireland but they expect to receive around 3,000.

"But we're certainly preparing that the services we provide will be able to cope with much larger numbers," he said.

Oleg Shenkaruk, 45, who moved to Northern Ireland from Ukraine almost 20 years ago, described his upset at seeing scenes from the Russian invasion, saying sometimes he cannot watch it on TV.

He has been helping at the Belfast centre with translation for the new arrivals.

"Our main target is to help Ukrainians get settled in Northern Ireland," he said.

"[*People*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/people) are settling very well, the community has been very welcoming and supportive, offering jobs and different sorts of help.

"It's great to be able to help people."

He said that while many of his family are in Northern Ireland, some remain in Ukraine and he talks to them every day.

"Some don't want to travel, it's a very hard decision to leave to a different country, it's not easy," he said.

**Load-Date:** April 29, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Fundraiser, 102, holds silence in support of Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:657K-GR31-JBNF-W28P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 16, 2022 Saturday 4:40 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 531 words

**Byline:** Rebecca Speare-Cole

**Highlight:** Dabirul Islam Choudhury is fasting during Ramadan.

**Body**

A 102-year-old man who raised thousands of pounds for Covid-19 relief during the pandemic has held a minute's silence at his home alongside refugees from Ukraine.

[*Dabirul Islam Choudhury*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dabirul-islam-choudhury) , who was awarded an [*OBE*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/obe) for raising £420,000 after Captain Sir Tom Moore inspired him to walk laps of his garden in [*Bow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bow) , east London while fasting for Ramadan, welcomed ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to his home on Saturday.

Mr Choudhury, who is fasting again, led 102 seconds of silence in the garden to support ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and raise money for the charitable initiative Ramadan [*Family*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/family) Commitment.

People from countries all over the world, including Bangladesh, Canada, India, Pakistan and Turkey tuned in to the live stream to take part in the event.

Akke Rahman, believed to be the first British Bangladeshi [*Muslim*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/muslim) to climb Mount Everest while fasting also joined the event's live stream from the base camp in Nepal.

Mr Choudhury and members of his community then spoke to refugees about the war in Ukraine in the garden.

Speaking to the PA news agency, Mr Choudhury said: "There are a lot of people there who are without food.

"There are a lot of people there who are hungry.

"There are a lot of people there who are dying.

"I like to support them," he added.

"If you help anybody, you will get the benefit of it.

"I wish to see that the people who are quarrelling should stop their quarrelling," he added.

On the 102-second silence, he said: "One minute is nothing, we are supporting them with the sign of one minute.

"I will tell mankind to help others and God will help others."

Yuliia Nikolaichuk, 30, a doctor from the Ukrainian city of Chernihiv who fled the country last month, joined the event and told the PA news agency that she wanted to do something to help people back at home.

"It was March 15 and we made the decision to leave from Ukraine, there was no food," she said.

After two weeks in Poland, Ms Nikolaichuk and her five-year-old son Nikita made it to London where they are staying with a family under the Government's refugee scheme.

On how the war has uprooted her life, she said: "We had other plans for our lives.

"I do not have any plans now.

"I do not know how we will live the next few days and the next few years."

She also said her son has been badly affected by the noises of explosions and helicopters that shook the house in Ukraine.

"He is still talking about turning out the light in the evening because the rockets could come," she said.

Talking about the silence, she said: "It means I can do something from here.

"I was feeling like I was just sitting here.

"This event today is to start doing more to help towards it."

Katerina Sokol, 40, who travelled to London with two of her sons aged 12 and seven from their home in the Donbas, also joined the event.

She said she was "scared" and "worried" about her husband who stayed back to fight, adding: "He is a bit depressed but he is glad we are safe."

On the help from the UK and around the world, she said: "I appreciate it very much because it is a great support.

"Soon we hope we can come back to our homes and our homes will be safe," she added.

Mr Choudhury is raising money on the webpage: [*https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Dabirul*](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Dabirul).

**Load-Date:** April 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Wimbledon hand out hundreds of free tickets to Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65S3-K7T1-JBNF-W0F9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 23, 2022 Thursday 5:06 PM GMT

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**Section:** TENNIS,SPORT; Version:1

**Length:** 282 words

**Byline:** Benedict Smith

**Highlight:** The tickets were presented at an afternoon tea held in Merton, south-west London, for the borough’s recent arrivals and their host families

**Body**

[*Wimbledon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wimbledon) organisers have handed out hundreds of free tickets to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in a bid to welcome them to their new homes.

The tickets were presented at an afternoon tea held in Merton, south-west London, for the borough’s recent arrivals and their host families.

Food included the classic Wimbledon dish strawberries and cream, while white, green and purple bunting was draped from the ceiling in the tournament’s distinctive colours.

The tables were decorated with tennis balls, which were taken by two young boys to bounce on their miniature racquets.

Slawek Szczepanski, chief executive of the Polish Family Association – which organised the event, was impressed by the resilience of the refugees.

“Those people came a few weeks ago, totally shattered, and now they’re able to join us for tea,” he said.

“They left the country with nothing, they needed to go, they don’t have anything to go back to, they don’t know if their family’s still alive.

“That kind of trauma is an awful experience, and seeing them now overcoming those issues and trying to fit in, it’s amazing.”

Merton has taken at least 400 Ukrainians, while more than 100 local families have opened their doors for those fleeing the war.

In a couple of weeks, the refugees will be able to spend the day at No.1 Court – a chance to see some “amazing tennis”, according to Wimbledon Foundation head Paige Murphy.

She added: “It’s an incredibly proud moment for us – it’s really part of our mission… to give people a really special experience after a really traumatic few months.

“To be able to provide a unique day when they can hopefully have a bit of respite and really get some enjoyment out of it is incredibly inspiring for us.”

**Load-Date:** June 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees face 'chaos' trying to apply to UK family visa scheme*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y5-W921-DY4H-K0CP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 11:13 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 1262 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Priti Patel urged to 'accept that things are going wrong' as families who have fled Russian conflict forced to travel for hours to attend visa appointments, with some unable to book one at all

**Body**

[***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) are facing "total chaos" as they try to apply to join relatives in Britain under the [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) 's bespoke visa scheme, as Downing Street contradicted Priti Patel's pledge to expand the route.

Ministers have been accused of "badly letting Ukrainians down" after it emerged that those who have fled the Russian conflict are having to travel for hours and in some cases wait for days before they can make an application to [*the home secretary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) 's family migration route.

It came after [*Downing Street*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/downing-street) dismissed suggestions that Ms Patel was examining options to create a "humanitarian route" - which would offer ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** the right to come to the UK regardless of whether they have family ties - with a spokesman saying this was in fact referring to government schemes that have already been announced.

The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome campaign*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/ukraine-war-russia-refugees-welcome-b2025033.html) is calling on the UK government to set up a resettlement scheme to give Ukrainians fleeing the invasion sanctuary in Britain.

On Monday evening the Home Office revealed that just 300 [*visas*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/visas) have been granted to Ukrainians after the department received thousands of applications for its [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) Family Scheme.

A lack of available appointment slots at UK visa centres in EU countries has meant some refugees are not currently able to apply at all, leaving them having to pay for accommodation or rely on charity in other countries while they could be supported by loved ones in Britain.

According to the Home Office's visa centre website, the majority of visa centres across Europe close before 4pm, with some closing as early as 1pm, and are not open on weekends.

Hundreds of Ukrainians who have arrived in Calais after fleeing from the conflict with the hope of reaching the UK have meanwhile been told they must travel to Paris or Brussels in order to make an application. The centre in Brussels is open on three half-days a week to process applications.

A poster has been put up in a hostel where around 139 Ukrainians - mainly women and children - are said to be staying, states: "No visas delivered in Calais" and orders refugees to fill in a visa form online, then go to UK visa centres in either Paris or Brussels in order to apply for a visa.

Ms Patel told the House of Commons on Monday that the Home Office was setting up a "bespoke VAC [visa application centre] en route to Calais but away from the port because we have to prevent a surge taking place".

A Home Office spokesperson later said it was in the process of establishing a second visa centre in France which would be "by referral from Border Force only to support Ukrainians".

But the Home Office has released no further details about this centre, and the poster remained up in the hostel on Monday evening.

The shocking poster that greets Ukraine refugees arriving here in Calais. Appears to be absolutely no official British help on the ground for these traumatised people. The wonderful volunteers of [*@Care4Calais*](https://twitter.com/Care4Calais?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) are doing their best to help. [*pic.twitter.com/NHFR3ZltHv*](https://t.co/NHFR3ZltHv) - Andy Lines (@andylines) [*March 7, 2022*](https://twitter.com/andylines/status/1500837210895130629?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

The home secretary announced a family migration route for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** last week, under which she said tens of thousands of close relatives of British nationals and people settled in the UK would be eligible to come to the UK.

But in order to submit an application refugees are required to attend a UK visa centre, of which there are only one or two in most EU countries, meaning many must travel for several hours to attend one.

There are also issues with capacity, with UK-based family members and immigration lawyers reporting that they have been unable to find a free appointment slot on the website.

Immigration lawyer Jan Doerfel told The Independent he was supporting one Ukrainian family who had been unable to get an appointment at the visa centre in Moldova, which is open Monday to Friday between 9am and 3pm.

"The family has been told that the centre is staffed only by two part-time employees who work three days a week and there are no additional or separate slots for Ukrainian applicants," he said.

Shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper described the situation as "chaotic", saying there was a "huge gap between the rhetoric and the reality" when it came to the visa scheme.

"Please stop claiming this is all world beating and world leading and actually accept that it is not working and things are going wrong," she urged Ms Patel in the House of Commons on Monday.

Lana Bilko, 51, a Ukrainian national settled in London, arrived in Germany on Sunday to meet her elderly mother who fled the Ukraine conflict last week. After submitting her mother's visa application on Monday morning she was told it would take "at least five days" before they got a decision.

She had hoped to be able take her mother back to the UK on Monday evening, given Ms Patel had stated that it would take a matter of hours for [*visas*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/visas) to be processed.

The Ukrainian national, whose mother is 73, said: "I took time off for today, but now I have to take time off for the whole week. We stayed in a hotel, 90 a night - I can't afford for us to stay the whole week there."

Ms Bilko said of her elderly mother: "She has witnessed war. She is so scared. When she hears a plane passing she starts shaking because of what she witnessed. Ms Patel is playing with people's lives."

Andrew Polakov, 47, a Ukrainian living in Britain who is trying to assist his parents and in-laws to join his family after they fled the country, described the visa process as a "shambles".

The IT worker told The Independent he had been told by a member of staff on the Home Office helpline for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** that he could submit all six relatives' applications on the same online form.

He did this, but when his family members arrived at the visa centre in Chisinau in Moldova, a two-hour drive from where they are currently staying with friends, they were told they each had to submit one separately.

Mr Polakov discovered that there were no appointments available for the following day, so had to rush to fill in the other five forms and re-submit them that same day - which they managed to do. The family has now been told they must wait 48 hours for a response.

"It's ridiculous. It totally contradicts what the Home Office told us. The whole thing doesn't work. It's total chaos," he said.

Nearly 600 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have arrived in Calais over the last week and tried to join their family members in the UK. The prefecture in Calais told The Independent 286 of them have been turned away and told they must travel to other French regions to apply for a visa.

Clare Mosely, founder of charity Care4Calais, which has been providing nappies, sanitary products and other items to the refugees, told The Independent: "There's a real lack of clarity about how it works and what they need to do to apply for a visa.

"Some of them have been told to go back to Paris, but it's really expensive to live in Paris and stay in hotels in Paris."

It came as French interior minister [*Gerald Darmanin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gerald-darmanin) warned that a failure to process ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***' visas quickly could push some into taking small boats across the [*English Channel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/english-channel).

It meanwhile [*emerged*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukrainian-refugees-france-uk-fines-b2030429.html) that transport operators face fines of up to £2,000 per person if they bring ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** without the right visas to the UK.

A government spokesperson said there continued to be capacity at visa application centres across Europe.

They said that along with the family route, the Home Office would soon open an "unlimited sponsorship route" for Ukrainians without family ties here.

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*More than 12,000 pledges of rooms for Ukrainian refugees in Ireland*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YP-KGH1-JBNF-W29N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 10, 2022 Thursday 4:27 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 656 words

**Byline:** Cate McCurry

**Highlight:** Around 2,500 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have recently arrived in Ireland.

**Body**

More than 12,000 pledges of accommodation have been made by Irish people to refugees fleeing Ukraine, the Irish Red Cross has said.

It comes days after the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) announced plans to allow Irish people to register available accommodation.

Around 75% of offers made in the last four days are for shared accommodation where people have a room to spare.

Donations from members of the public have reached 14 million euro (£11.7 million).

UKRAINE CRISIS APPEALIf you wish to support the Irish Red Cross Ukraine Crisis Appeal, you can do so at [*https://t.co/xsArilAugS*](https://t.co/xsArilAugS) , on Revolut, and via the donation buttons on our Facebook and Instagram pages.[*https://t.co/T4INpyw7Xo*](https://t.co/T4INpyw7Xo) - Irish Red Cross (@irishredcross) [*March 10, 2022*](https://twitter.com/irishredcross/status/1501866215895142405?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The Irish Red Cross said it needed further information from 2,234 people who offered accommodation.Around 2,500 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have arrived to Ireland in recent weeks.Some 2,149 offers have been made in [*Dublin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dublin) , 1,327 in Cork, 663 in Galway and 586 in Meath.A number of people living in [*Northern Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/northern-ireland) have also offered accommodation in Down, Antrim and Armagh.Minister for Transport Eamon Ryan said the Government may consider having Irish officials based at [*Polish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/polish) airports to facilitate people fleeing the war.We are ready and waiting and willing to provide whatever help. We will be on hand and available at a moment's noticeEamon RyanIt comes after Independent TD Cathal Berry called for a small team of diplomats to be stationed at Rzeszow and Krakow airports to deal with people travelling to Ireland."We shouldn't be sitting passively in [*Dublin Airport*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dublin-airport) waiting for refugees to arrive, we should be proactively getting information and passing it on," Mr Berry said.Mr Ryan said: "The Department of Foreign Affairs is working very closely, particularly with the Polish government, who are co-ordinating the response in this regard."We are ready and waiting and willing to provide whatever help. We will be on hand and available at a moment's notice."But it has to be co-ordinated and led by the Polish because they are there at the front line managing, so subject to their requests, the department would make a necessary response." Mr Berry raised the possibility of transporting people and babies injured in Ukraine after a bomb strike gutted a maternity hospital in Mariupol.He said there is capacity in Ireland's neonatal intensive care units."There is a national neonatal transport programme available, where the hospitals in Dublin link up with the Air Corps to transfer very, very critically ill children from abroad," he added."Ireland does have the capacity here to add a particular niche value to the evacuation and perhaps the minister might discuss with the Minister for Health, because it would start to make a huge difference to very, very sick, critically ill children and their parents in Ukraine."Mr Ryan said he does not believe it would be possible as it is difficult to get citizens out of the besieged city.Ireland punches above its weight.Since February 28, the Irish public has contributed over 13 million to our [*#UkraineCrisisAppeal*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/UkraineCrisisAppeal?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) , 9000 properties for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving in Ireland through the IRC's Register of Pledges and Corporate Ireland has donated over 3 million [*pic.twitter.com/OaLxp4c9l9*](https://t.co/OaLxp4c9l9) - Irish Red Cross (@irishredcross) [*March 9, 2022*](https://twitter.com/irishredcross/status/1501507857337958406?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

He also said Ukrainian teachers who travel to Ireland could be recruited to teach Ukrainian children.

Mr Ryan added: "The Teaching Council is now looking to see how could we employ some of the Ukrainian teachers who are coming in, to see how quickly could we establish classes that will allow them to maintain the Ukrainian curriculum."

He said the Government will work with the Ukrainian community and ambassador to ensure that Ukrainian children are provided with education.

Mr Ryan also said he expects to see a lot of lone parents travelling to Ireland, adding that they too will be provided with support.

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*EU chief thanks Irish people for ‘outstanding’ welcome for Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:670D-GB61-DY4H-K14X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

December 1, 2022 Thursday 2:38 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 673 words

**Byline:** Cate McCurry

**Highlight:** Ursula von der Leyen made her comments on the steps of Government Buildings in Dublin, where she was meeting Irish premier Micheal Martin.

**Body**

[*European Commission*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/european-commission) president [*Ursula von der Leyen*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ursula-von-der-leyen) has thanked the [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) people for their “outstanding” support welcoming ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Ms von der Leyen is on a two-day trip to [*Dublin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dublin) , where she is meeting Irish premier Micheal Martin.

The two leaders will discuss the war on Ukraine, the energy crisis, green transition and the [*Northern Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/northern-ireland) Protocol during her visit.

She will also address a joint sitting of the Houses of the Oireachtas to mark Ireland’s 50-year membership of the EU.

Speaking on the steps of Government Buildings in Dublin, Ms von der Leyen said: “I want to personally thank you (Micheal Martin) for the excellent co-operation we had in the last two-and-a-half years.

“These were very eventful years indeed. As you said, first of all the pandemic.

“You have steered very skilfully Ireland through the pandemic and out of the pandemic, and I highly appreciate how you’ve always been a strong supporter of our vaccine strategy.

“You have presented an excellent national recovery resilience plan and the next generation EU where I had the honour and pleasure to be here to present it together with you.

“Now, indeed, we are in difficult times because Russia unleashed an atrocious war against Ukraine. First and foremost I want to thank the Irish people, for opening their hearts and their homes to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. This is outstanding.

“I want to thank you for the strong support for Ukraine to become a candidate member of the European Union.”

She said everyone was feeling the knock-on effects of the war in Ukraine, including the huge energy prices.

The European Commission president also praised Ireland’s efforts to invest in renewable energy.

“We’re working very closely together, first of all, to diversify away from Russian fossil fuels with success, she added.

Delighted to welcome President [*@vonderleyen*](https://twitter.com/vonderleyen?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) to Dublin as we mark [*#EU50*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/EU50?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). Discussing our unequivocal support for the Ukrainian people as they face a difficult winter.Also discussing energy, the economy, green transition, the Protocol, and strong relations with the US and UK. [*pic.twitter.com/HtsoauhKnW*](https://t.co/HtsoauhKnW) — Micheál Martin (@MichealMartinTD) [*December 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/MichealMartinTD/status/1598296408985333761?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) “We have saved a lot of energy, we have filled our storage so we are safe for the winter.“But of course there needs to be an answer for the mid to long-term, and here I want to underline how impressive the Irish investment in renewable energy is.“So you know your best way to become an clean energy superpower in the EU.”Mr Martin also paid tribute to Ms von der Leyen.“I want to pay tribute to the leadership of the president over the last number of years, particularly during the pandemic, the war on Ukraine and managing the energy crisis that has resulted from that,” he said. In Dublin today. Very happy to meet [*@MichealMartinTD*](https://twitter.com/MichealMartinTD?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). Thank you for the great cooperation over the past 2.5 years -quite eventful years, too.In difficult times, you always remained true to our European values.Go raibh míle maith agat. [*pic.twitter.com/z0WiTfPjON*](https://t.co/z0WiTfPjON) — Ursula von der Leyen (@vonderleyen) [*December 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/vonderleyen/status/1598303208396316674?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

“We will discuss today how we can continue to make real our unequivocal support for the people of Ukraine, as they face into a very cold and difficult winter and face the ravages of a terrible, immoral and illegal war. Of course, we will discuss the energy crisis, the slowing global economy.

“But above all, knowing the president’s strong commitment to intensifying the green transition, we will discuss that and of course, our relationship with like-minded countries like the United States and the United Kingdom. We will discuss the ongoing situation in terms of the Northern Ireland protocol.

“We appreciate the solidarity that has been shown. But of course, we all want to have a constructive and solid relationship with our neighbours, the United Kingdom. So that will form the basis of our discussions today as we mark 50 years of Ireland’s transformative membership with the European Union.”

Ms von der Leyen will later meet with the Irish president Michael D Higgins.

**Load-Date:** December 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*How many Ukrainian refugees have European countries taken in?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651D-P4M1-JBNF-W4XD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 18, 2022 Friday 6:20 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 905 words

**Byline:** Joe Sommerlad

**Highlight:** Almost 3.3m people displaced by Russian invasion so far, according to UN

**Body**

[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's brutal invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has seen the Russian military subject the neighbouring state's border cities to relentless shelling campaigns over the last three weeks, slowly but surely reducing the likes of Kharkiv and Mariupol to rubble.

Undeterred by near-unanimous international condemnation and draining economic sanctions, Mr Putin urges his forces on, with international observers accusing [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) of committing war crimes by deliberately going after civilian targets like residential apartment blocks and hospitals in order to cause panic, with even children's nurseries, a Holocaust memorial and a theatre caught up in the siege warfare so far.

Russia's progress has been greatly slowed by the resistance put up by the Ukrainian people while their president, [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) , has become a hero around the world, admired for his dogged leadership from the streets of Kyiv, tirelessly rallying his citizens and calling on the international community to do more to help.

The other aspect of the war has been the onset of the biggest humanitarian crisis Europe has seen since the [*Second World War*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/second-world-war).

[*According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*](https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine) (UNHCR), as of Friday 18 March, no fewer than 3,270,662 people have fled the Ukraine since the onset of hostilities on Thursday 24 February.

The vast majority of displaced people have headed West, crossing the borders of Ukraine's neighbouring states like [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) , [*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova) , [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) and [*Slovakia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/slovakia) while others have made it further afield into Europe.

Matthew Saltmarsh of the the UN Refugee Agency said on Friday the number of crossings into Poland had dropped by around 50 per cent from its peak of 100,000 a day but warned it could quickly pick up again should Russia begin to target the western city of Lviv, which has so far largely escaped the violence.

Of those who have already arrived in Poland, Mr Saltmarsh said they were showing signs of sustained trauma, adding: "Many of them don't have a plan. Those who arrive are not clear where they can go."

Irina Bogdaniuk, 24, newly arrived in Medyka from Sumy, said of the conditions in the region she had fled: "There is no water, there is no electricity, there is no food... children are crying, it is cold and scary."

The Polish town of Rzeszow, some 62 miles from the Ukrainian border, is being used as a humanitarian hub by the UN, where emergency supplies like food, blankets, solar lamps, warm clothing, mattresses, jerry cans and plastic sheeting are being stockpiled in warehouses, with the fighting still too hostile in places like Mariupol to enable delivery of the goods to those who need them most.

Here is the UNHCR's latest data on the countries that have taken in the most asylum seekers escaping the conflict:

Poland 1,975,449 Romania 508,692 Moldova 355,426 Hungary 291,230 Slovakia 234,738 Russia 184,563 Belarus 2,127

Figures from other nations are less readily available and less precise, being dependent on what estimates the interior ministries of their respective governments make available.

The [*Czech Republic*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/czech-republic) 's prime minister Petr Fiala said on Thursday that his country had [*taken in 270,000 asylum seekers*](https://english.radio.cz/nearly-180000-special-visas-now-granted-ukrainian-refugees-8745075) from Ukraine and the German government announced on Friday that it had taken in 197,000.

Elsewhere, [*Italy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/italy) 's interior ministry said [*more than 50,000 displaced people had arrived*](https://www.ansa.it/english/newswire/english_service/2022/03/17/ukraine-refugees-in-italy-top-50000_f7941b34-cf91-4c54-81ba-32d16ffe9cf5.html) as a result of the crisis, the majority settling in Bologna, Milan, Rome and Naples.

[*Bulgaria*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bulgaria) 's PM Kiril Petkov has said that his country has [*taken in approximately 78,000*](https://bnr.bg/en/post/101615905/bulgaria-has-welcomed-more-than-78000-ukrainian-refugees) ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** so far, around 37,000 of whom he expects to stay, while [*Estonia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/estonia) has accepted [*another 23,886*](https://news.err.ee/1608535072/almost-24-000-ukrainian-refugees-have-arrived-in-estonia) , of which 17,819 are expected to stay.

French interior minister Gerard Darmanin meanwhile told BFM TV on Wednesday morning that around [*17,000* ***Ukrainian******refugees*** *had arrived*](https://www.laprovence.com/actu/en-direct/6694418/guerre-en-ukraine-17-000-refugies-ukrainiens-ont-ete-accueillis-en-france-darmanin.html) on French soil fleeing the war.

In the UK, [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) 's administration has been pilloried for its shambolic response to the crisis so far, although the application process for the [*Homes for Ukraine*](https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk/) initiative announced by levelling up secretary [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) finally launches on Friday, enabling British citizens to make their spare rooms available to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

More than 150,000 people had already signalled their interest in advance, a commendable gesture of generosity given that many questions about the exact nature of the "matching" process and the knock-on effects of participating remain unanswered.

Mr Johnson said at the start of this month that the UK could potentially accommodate [*up to 200,000 refugees*](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-60569292) from Ukraine.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition click here. If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine: Boris Johnson 'halted Home Office plans to expand refugee offer'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6503-HHV1-DY4H-K441-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 12, 2022 Saturday 10:18 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:4

**Length:** 729 words

**Byline:** Adam Forrest

**Highlight:** Priti Patel suggested setting up 'humanitarian route' for those fleeing war

**Body**

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) and officials at No 10 are said to have halted [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) plans to expand the UK's offer to Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion.

Home secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) has come in for fierce criticism from both Conservative and Labour MPs for her response to the [***Ukraine***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ***refugee crisis*** and the insistence on Ukrainians complying with visa requirements.

Downing Street intervened to stop a plan by Ms Patel to open up a new "humanitarian route" for [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) fleeing the war, according to Sky News, who cited government sources.

"The problem is No 10 - the PM and [chief of staff] Steve Barclay - who are personally slapping this down," one source told the broadcaster.

On Monday Ms Patel told The Sun she was "urgently escalating" the government's response and was "now investigating the legal options to create a humanitarian route".

But No 10 has been cautious on the idea of opening up routes for large numbers of Ukrainians to come to the UK without going through extensive checks.

Downing Street is also understood to have reined in a Home Office plan to allow the family members of Ukrainians on temporary visas to enter the UK. Only those with permanent visas can currently bring in family members.

Only 1,305 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have been granted a visa under the Home Office's family migration scheme, the government said on Friday - despite tens of thousands applying for refuge.

Levelling up secretary Michael Gove has been tasked with setting up a new sponsorship route that will allow local authorities, community groups and individuals to provide a home to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

But refugee charities have told The Independent that Ukrainians may end up in hotels and hostels because of the "decimation" of official resettlement programme funding.

They warned that the sponsorship scheme set to be launched by Mr Gove on Monday should not replace large-scale state humanitarian programmes, amid fears that community groups might be expected to "pick up the pieces".

Tim Naor Hilton, chief executive of Refugee Action, told The Independent that the failure to maintain previous resettlement programmes had left the UK unprepared for an influx of refugees.

"That is why 12,000 Afghan refugees are still stuck in hotels seven months on from the Afghanistan evacuation, and why we are deeply concerned that the government is considering similar forms of 'temporary' accommodation for Ukrainians," he said.

The Times reported that the government expects accommodation providers such as hotels, landlords and B&B owners to account for "the bulk of offers" under the new sponsorship scheme.

Britons keen to house ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** under the government's new sponsorship scheme will need to agree to do so for at least six months, reports suggest. But uncertainty remains about the length of time sponsored refugees will be allowed to stay, and the level of benefits the new arrivals will be allowed to claim.

It was thought that Ukrainians welcomed under the sponsorship scheme would be allowed to stay for an initial period of 12 months. But there are concerns that this would put them at odds with refugees coming through the Ukrainian family visa scheme, who are entitled to remain in the UK for 36 months.

It comes as the French president Emmanuel Macron accused the UK of failing to live up to its "grand statements" on helping ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

"I would hope that the Ukrainian men and women, who have lived through horror and crossed Europe to reach their families on UK territory, will be better treated," said Mr Macron, following the difficulties some have had in applying for visas at Calais and elsewhere.

On Thursday, Ms Patel announced that from Tuesday people would be able to apply online for a visa and would no longer have to go to a processing centre to give their biometrics.

"We are now making the process quicker and simpler by removing the need to physically visit visa application centres for many of those who are making the perilous journey across Europe," said a Home Office spokesperson.

A government spokesperson denied claims of a row between No 10 and the Home Office over routes for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

"The government is united and working at pace to deliver our new sponsorship route, which will allow individuals and organisations in the UK to provide accommodation and support for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***," said the spokesperson.

**Load-Date:** March 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*PM 'slapped down' Patel's plan to expand refugee offer*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6508-FG51-JCS0-D4N7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 13, 2022 Sunday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 8

**Length:** 726 words

**Byline:** ADAM FORREST

**Body**

Boris Johnson and officials at No 10 are said to have halted Home Office plans to expand the UK's offer to Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion.

Home secretary Priti Patel has come in for fierce criticism from both Conservative and Labour MPs for her response to the ***Ukraine*** ***refugee crisis*** and the insistence on Ukrainians complying with visa requirements. But Downing Street intervened to stop a plan by Ms Patel to open up a new "humanitarian route" for refugees fleeing the war, according to Sky News, which cited government sources.

"The problem is No 10 - the PM and [chief of staff] Steve Barclay - who are personally slapping this down," one source told the broadcaster.

Last Monday Ms Patel told The Sun she was "urgently escalating" the government's response and was "now investigating the legal options to create a humanitarian route". But No 10 has been cautious on the idea of opening up routes for large numbers of Ukrainians to come to the UK without going through extensive checks.

Downing Street is also understood to have reined in a Home Office plan to allow the family members of Ukrainians on temporary visas to enter the UK. Only those with permanent visas can currently bring in family members. And only 1,305 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have been granted a visa under the Home Office's family migration scheme, the government said on Friday - despite tens of thousands applying for refuge.

Levelling up secretary Michael Gove has been tasked with setting up a new sponsorship route that will allow local authorities, community groups and individuals to provide a home to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. But refugee charities have told The Independent that Ukrainians may end up in hotels and hostels because of the "decimation" of official resettlement programme funding.

They warned that the sponsorship scheme set to be launched byMr Gove tomorrow should not replace large-scale state humanitarian programmes, amid fears that community groups might be expected to "pick up the pieces". Tim Naor Hilton, chief executive of Refugee Action, toldThe Independentthat the failure to maintain previous resettlement programmes had left the UK unprepared for an influx of refugees.

"That is why 12,000 Afghan refugees are still stuck in hotels seven months on from the Afghanistan evacuation, and why we are deeply concerned that the government is considering similar forms of 'temporary' accommodation for Ukrainians," he said.

The Times reported that the government expects accommodation providers such as hotels, landlords and B&B owners to account for "the bulk of offers" under the new sponsorship scheme. Britons keen to house ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** under the government's new sponsorship scheme will need to agree to do so for at least six months, reports suggest.

But uncertainty remains about the length of time sponsored refugees will be allowed to stay, and the level of benefits the new arrivals will be allowed to claim. It was thought that Ukrainians welcomed under the sponsorship scheme would be allowed to stay for an initial period of 12 months. But there are concerns that this would put them at odds with refugees coming through the Ukrainian family visa scheme, who are entitled to remain in the UK for 36 months.

The French president Emmanuel Macron has accused the UK of failing to live up to its "grand statements" on helping ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. "I would hope that the Ukrainian men and women who have lived through horror and crossed Europe to reach their families on UK territory will be better treated," said Mr Macron, following the difficulties some have had in applying for visas in Calais and elsewhere.

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**Load-Date:** March 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Scientists donate profits from Chernobyl schnapps drinks to Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:653P-W6G1-JBNF-W1VN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 29, 2022 Tuesday 10:09 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 296 words

**Byline:** Ben Mitchell

**Highlight:** The Chernobyl Spirit Company is donating the profits from the first 850-bottle batches of its two new premium fruit schnapps.

**Body**

A company set up by UK academics to create vodka from crops grown near to [*Chernobyl*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/chernobyl) is donating profits from two new fruit schnapps drinks to refugees from the war in Ukraine.

Professor [*Jim Smith*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jim-smith) , of the [*University of Portsmouth*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/university-portsmouth) , and Ukrainian colleagues set up a social enterprise in 2019 to show that vodka could be safely produced in the region affected by the nuclear reactor accident in 1986.

The initiative started as a scientific experiment and progressed to the team based in the Ukraine and at the [*Hampshire*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hampshire) university selling the radioactive-free vodka in the UK.

The Chernobyl Spirit Company is now supporting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** by donating the profits from the first 850-bottle batches of its two new premium fruit schnapps.

The spirits are 5x distilled in Ukraine from pears and plums harvested last autumn from districts affected by the Chernobyl accident and now partly under Russian control.

The company started sales of its Apple Spirit last autumn and has donated £15,000 - all its profits so far - to the Ukrainian refugee appeal with at least 75% of all future profits from the social enterprise going to support the recovery of communities in Ukraine.

Prof Smith said: "Having spent my career working on the consequences of Chernobyl I'm horrified to see the much worse impact of the Russian war on Ukraine.

"Our social enterprise aims to support communities affected by Chernobyl, many of which are now under Russian occupation."

Colleague Dr Gennady Laptev, a Chernobyl emergency worker who is currently in [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) with his wife and 86-year-old father, said: "We hope our social enterprise will help people affected by the devastating social and economic impacts, first of the Chernobyl accident and now of the war."

For more details visit: [*www.atomikvodka.com*](http://www.atomikvodka.com)

**Load-Date:** March 29, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Scotswoman uses parents' car to drive Ukrainian refugees to safety*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651C-NXX1-JBNF-W1X9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 18, 2022 Friday 12:39 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 457 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** In total, Demelza Sully has travelled around 5,000 miles since the outbreak of war in her parents' car.

**Body**

When the war in Ukraine broke out, Scotswoman Demelza Sully borrowed her parents' car and headed to Poland.

Ms Sully, a 40-year-old from the village of Eredine, in [*Argyll*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/argyll) and Bute, put out the word on social media that she had a car and was willing to help drive ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** from the [*Polish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/polish) border to wherever they needed.

Already, the food technologist has brought three families across [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) to safety and has received donations of £3,000 from friends and family to support her mission.

In total, she has travelled around 5,000 miles since the outbreak of war in her parents' car, offering any help she can to refugees unable to fly.

The knowing how much they've gone through is the hard bit. Wanting them to trust me - they're putting their lives in the hands of a stranger

Demelza Sully

Viktoria Kasianenko, 39, was driven along with her four-year-old daughter Barbara Yevlakhova and step-daughter Anna Yevlakhova, 32, to join her husband Yury, 58, in [*Dublin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dublin).

They would have struggled to make it without the help of Ms Sully, who drove them from Poland all the way to the Irish capital.

Speaking to the PA news agency after arriving in Dublin, they described Ms Sully as "the angel who saved us".

"The driving bit, that's no problem," Ms Sully told PA.

"The wanting to make people feel comfortable, safe and secure in such a difficult situation is the heart-breaking bit for me."

The Scotswoman is married to a Polish man, so she is familiar with driving through the country.

She said she has seen many Ukrainians, with little [*English*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/english) , struggle in airports while trying to book last-minute flights.

"It was a wing and a prayer to get them on the planes," she said.

Ultimately, she wants to help in any way she can those fleeing the horrific conflict.

"The knowing how much they've gone through is the hard bit. Wanting them to trust me - they're putting their lives in the hands of a stranger," she said.

"It is so many women travelling on their own. And I'm a woman.

"I just want them to feel safe and comfortable.

"There have been so many tears over this journey, in a good and a bad way."

She has been disappointed by the response of the UK Government to the crisis.

Ms Sully described how few difficulties there were in bringing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to Dublin.

"Although the UK are doing some further steps to be kinder and more helpful, they're still not stopping the visa stage," she said.

"A lot of people are wanting to come to the UK. I can see that on the group chats at the moment."

Ms Sully took time off work to travel to Europe and hopes to return.

"I can see a need for it. Even if it is just being with people at the airport to help them."

But in the meantime, she has a car to return to her parents.

"I think they need it back," she said.

**Load-Date:** March 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Paramount makes Nickelodeon content free to Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6586-S4F1-JBNF-W3JJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 19, 2022 Tuesday 1:11 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,TV & RADIO,CULTURE; Version:1

**Length:** 464 words

**Byline:** Olivia Emily

**Highlight:** Company hopes to provide 'comfort' to families forced out of their homes

**Body**

[*Paramount*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/paramount) Global is making [*Nickelodeon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nickelodeon) content free to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

The American film and TV company is launching the initiative to provide "comfort" to families who have been forced to leave [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) because of the Russian invasion, "enabling [families] to continue feeling at home by watching their favourite cartoons, even if abroad".

Nickelodeon will introduce Ukrainian-language versions on YouTube for select shows, including SpongeBob SquarePants, Blaze and the Monster Machines and Paw Patrol, per[*The Hollywood Reporter.*](https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/business/business-news/paramount-nickelodeon-content-ukrainian-refugees-europe-1235130810/)

Paramount are also launching Nickelodeon Ukraine Pluto TV, a commercial-free Ukrainian language channel airing Nickelodeon shows. The channel will be available across Europe, "including in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Poland, Hungary, the Nordics, Spain, France, Italy and Middle East/North Africa", the company said.

The news comes in addition to a recent $1m (£768,000) donation from Paramount to support humanitarian organisations helping families flee Ukraine.

Paramount also plan to provide humanitarian organisations more than $2.5m (£1.9m) in free advertising across channels in the US to "[educate] global audiences about the heroic work they are doing during these challenging times", Paramount said.

In response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Paramount halted its operations in Russia in March, affecting the theatrical releases of The Lost City and Sonic the Hedgehog 2. Publishing subsidiary Simon & Schuster have also paused new book licensing and translation deals.

Paramount CEO Bob Bakish told staff: "Since the beginning of this crisis, our teams across the world have been working around the clock to determine the best, and most importantly - safest - ways we as a business can show our support for all those impacted.

Bakish added: "The safety and security of employees and all those who work with us is, and will always be, our top priority. We continue to offer specialized support services to hundreds of staff, freelance and fixed term employees in Ukraine, Russia, and Poland whose lives are being impacted by this crisis."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** April 19, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Number of Ukrainian refugees who have arrived in Britain tops 100,000*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:661J-62P1-JBNF-W37X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 28, 2022 Thursday 10:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:3

**Length:** 610 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Campaigners say success of Ukraine refugee schemes should be replicated for others fleeing conflict

**Body**

The number of ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) who have been granted sanctuary in the UK’s since the start of [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s invasion has topped 100,000 for the first time, figures show.

Government data released on Thursday shows that 104,000 people have arrived in Britain under Britain’s two Ukrainian refugee programmes – 31,300 under the family scheme and 72,700 people under the Homes for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) sponsorship scheme.

The figures also show that, as of Tuesday, around 198,200 applications have been made for [*visas*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/visas) , and 166,200 visas have been issued. This leaves 32,000 people still waiting for decisions on their applications, and 62,200 who have been granted but are yet to arrive in the UK.

The numbers are considerably higher than the volume of people who have come to the UK under other refugee schemes.

The Syrian resettlement scheme, which ended in 2021, welcomed 20,000 refugees, and the two schemes for Afghans – the Afghan Relocation Assistance Policy (ARAP) and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) – have welcomed around 19,000 so far, including those evacuated during Operation Pitting.

Robina Qureshi, executive officer at Positive Action in Housing, a charity that has been matching refugees and asylum seekers with hosts in the UK for decades, said she welcomed the high numbers.

But she added: “Ukrainians aren’t the only refugees. There’s this narrative that they’re the only legitimate ones, but there are many from other countries – Yemen Syria, Iraq. And they have the threat of the Rwanda plan facing them.

“People arriving on the Channel are in the main refugees, either fleeing war or persecution, and they are left in limbo and fear. It’s concerning that we are unable to help them.

“We hope that now that this model has been established, the government will look at Homes for Yemen, Homes for Syria, because there is no safe route for these people.”

While the numbers granted sanctuary under the Ukrainian refugee schemes are relatively high, there are also concerns about the support people receive once they arrive.

Data from a [*recent survey*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/uk-news/ukrainian-refugees-money-work-healthcare-ons-uk-b2124346.html) by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show that only 37 per cent of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** reported that they have enough money to support themselves and their dependents for the next three months.

Separate data, published by the government in June, showed that 660 households who have come to Britain via the Ukraine routes have been forced to register as homeless.

[*The Independent revealed in May*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-families-home-office-uk-refugees-b2067805.html) that thousands of Ukrainians seeking refuge in the UK had been forced to live in overcrowded accommodation, with whole families sharing single rooms.

Local authorities are given £10,500 in central government funding for each refugee under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, but receive no money for those arriving under the family route.

Calls are mounting for councils to be given funding to support those arriving under the family scheme, and for the government to allow refugees on this scheme to be able to switch to the Homes for Ukraine route, which it pledged to do earlier this month.

Labour MP Clive Betts, who chairs the Levelling Up Committee, wrote to the refugees minister last week demanding an update on when the government would fulfil its pledge to enable people to switch from the family scheme to the Homes for Ukraine scheme

Mr Betts said: “As a committee, we have heard of difficulties arising with the rematching process within the Homes for Ukraine scheme when accommodation is found to be unsuitable and when there appears to be perverse application of the rules, with families unable to switch.

“Refugee families need a proper home, not a hotel bedroom or temporary bed and breakfast.”

**Load-Date:** July 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees: How can I take part in the new sponsorship scheme?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YW-WFM1-DY4H-K079-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 11, 2022 Friday 12:51 PM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 626 words

**Byline:** Kate Ng

**Highlight:** UK government has announced a scheme that would welcome more refugees into the country

**Body**

Britons will soon be asked to open their homes to Ukrainians fleeing their country, as part of a new "sponsored" humanitarian route to allow more [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) to travel to the UK.

The route will give Ukrainians without family links to the UK the opportunity come to the country in order to escape the war against [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia).

It comes after the government faced criticism for its response to the refugee crisis. Michael Gove, the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Secretary, is expected to set out details of the new route on Monday.

Prime minister Boris Johnson told MPs that the route will allow "everybody in this country [to] offer a home to people fleeing [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ".

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine is entering its third week and more than two million people have fled the country.

As of Monday 7 March, just 50 Ukrainians had been granted visas to enter the UK and refugees have reported facing too much paperwork to procure the visas. At the time, this was just 1 per cent of the 5,535 people who had applied to the scheme since Saturday.

Here is everything we know about how the scheme will work and how you can get involved:

What is it?

The new sponsorship scheme would reportedly give British individuals, charities, businesses and community groups the opportunity to offer rooms to those escaping the conflict.

[*According to The Daily Telegraph*](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/03/10/british-public-will-asked-take-ukrainian-refugees-homes/) , ministers will announce a hotline and website where vetted individuals and organisations can offer up a space to incoming refugees.

Those who enter the UK through the new route will be allowed to stay for an initial period of 12 months. They will be entitled to work, claim benefits and access public services, it has been reported.

A spokesperson for the government said: "The routes we have put in place follow extensive engagement with Ukrainian partners.

"This is a rapidly moving and complex picture and as the situation develops we will continue to keep our support under constant review."

How can I help?

The government has not yet launched its webpage or hotline, but once it does, you can register to offer accommodation and employment to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

A similar sponsorship programme [*was launched in 2016*](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/community-sponsorship-scheme-launched-for-refugees-in-the-uk) on a community level that allowed community groups including charities, faith groups, churches and businesses to help refugees resettle in the UK.

It was launched in response to the global refugee crisis, which saw 10.3 million people become newly displaced within the year. The UNHCR estimated that by the end of 2016, the global population of forcibly displaced people grew from 33.9 million in 1997 to a record high of 65.6 million in 2016.

Any member of the public could register through an online service to offer housing, work or support for resettling. These include helping people access public services, arranging transport and running errands, and welcoming people into the local area.

What is the current route for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***?

As of Friday 11 March, ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** need to have family in the UK in order to apply for a visa to travel here.

From Tuesday 15 March, they will be able to apply for the visas online. Until then, those with family links are still having to travel to visa application centres in Ukraine to give biometric information, such as fingerprints.

Boris Johnson told MPs earlier this week that "almost 1,000 visas" have been issued since the start of the war, and that "we expect those numbers to rise to in the regions of hundreds of thousands".

You can also [*help by donating to the people of Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-help-emergency-b2027490.html). Funds will go towards humanitarian aid, psychological support, and medical supplies for paramedics and doctors on the frontlines.

**Load-Date:** March 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Jack Osbourne reveals he has been helping Ukrainian refugees in Romania*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652P-BS01-JBNF-W0R0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 24, 2022 Thursday 5:32 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,TV & RADIO,CULTURE; Version:1

**Length:** 259 words

**Byline:** Sam Moore

**Highlight:** Former reality show star says he was 'compelled to help'

**Body**

[*Jack Osbourne*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jack-osbourne) has revealed he secretly travelled to Romania to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the[*conflict with Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-news-putin-peace-talks-b2042794.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine%20news%20-%20latest:%20Nato%20to%20strengthen%20forces%20on%20eastern%20border%20and%20send%20hazmat%20suits%20to%20civilians).

Posting a lengthy statement on Instagram along with several photos, Osbourne said he had recently returned from the expedition and opened up about his time in eastern Europe.

"I did this because I felt compelled to help and posting a flag or whatever just doesn't quite feel like enough," the former reality star said.

Osbourne said he was tasked with "providing medical help to special needs orphans who were being evacuated from Ukraine and had worked with a group called Third Wave Volunteers, who specialise in responding to humanitarian disasters.

"I saw aspects of humanity at its worst yet also at its greatest," he said. "While working along the border I saw waves and waves of refugees, mainly women and children all fleeing their country in hopes of finding safety. Fear and uncertainty was the most common feeling that was being portrayed."

Osbourne concluded his post by saying: "I'd like to thank the team I was working with, for the sake of security I won't name them here, but you know who you are."

View this post on Instagram [*A post shared by Jack Osbourne (@jackosbourne)*](https://www.instagram.com/p/CbfZ-hELXHg/?utm_source=ig_embed&utm_campaign=loading)

In latest estimates by the UN, it is believed [*around three million people*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-three-million-refugees-russia-b2036678.html) have fled Ukraine since the beginning of the conflict a month ago.

It is also [*estimated*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-russia-israeli-kyiv-b2043320.html%22%20title=%22Half%20of%20Ukraine's%20children%20now%20displaced%20by%20Russia's%20war) that around half of all of the children in Ukraine have been displaced by the ongoing conflict.

**Load-Date:** March 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Hotel use for Ukrainian refugees bad for hospitality industry, says tourism boss*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:655F-T8R1-JBNF-W38D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 6, 2022 Wednesday 4:45 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 644 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** Failte Ireland boss Paul Kelly said that housing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Irish hotels in the long term could pose a serious danger to a tourism sector.

**Body**

Housing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) hotels will damage the tourism industry, an Oireachtas committee has heard.

Failte Ireland chief executive [*Paul Kelly*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/paul-kelly) said that housing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Irish hotels in the long-term could pose a serious danger to a tourism sector still struggling to re-bound from the Covid-19 pandemic.

In a historic address to the Irish parliament on Wednesday morning, Ukrainian President [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) said Ireland has not remained neutral over the disaster [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) has inflicted on his country.

Over 15,000 refugees have now arrived in Ireland from Ukraine, with 4,000 hotel bedrooms being used to house some of that number.

Representatives from the tourism and hospitality industry appeared before the Oireachtas tourism committee on Wednesday to discuss the issue of staff shortages.

Mr Kelly, quizzed by Fianna Fail senator Shane Cassells, said: "Tourism accommodation for refugees is neither good for refugees nor good for tourism."

The meeting heard that every hotel bed generates further revenue in restaurants, pubs and other venues.

He said that if hotel beds are used for emergency refugee accommodation, "then we will see significant knock-on impacts elsewhere".

"If you have significant tourism accommodation stock coming out of the market, that will limit our ability to recover.

"If they can't get a bed, they can't come."

He said that Failte Ireland was working closely with the Government on the issue.

[*Mark McGowan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mark-mcgowan) , the president of the Restaurants Association of Ireland, said that the war was "exacerbating" the cost of meat, chicken and other foodstuffs.

Politicians also heard that a skills shortage "crisis" dates back to 2012, but has been worsened by the pandemic.

Representatives from the hospitality industry also rejected any suggestion that low pay was one of the reasons for the precarious shortages in workers.

Details from a Failte Ireland survey, shared with the Oireachtas Committee on Tourism, suggests that there are 40,000 vacancies across the hospitality and tourism industry.

Mr Kelly said that of 1,000 businesses surveyed, 30% said that they faced closure if recruitment issues were not solved.

"The loss of skills is evident at across all roles as one in three workers now are new to the tourism sector," he said.

Failte Ireland, he said, has invested 300,000 euro on tourism marketing campaigns since last summer to tackle the issue, with nearly half a million euro set to be spent on a new hiring campaign.

Adrian Cummins, from the Restaurants Association of Ireland, condemned delays in the issuing of work permits to international workers.

He also said an urgent recruitment campaign was needed as part of Government efforts to "save summer".

Not all those solutions were accepted by other representatives.

Mr Kelly sounded a note of caution about calls from Mr Cummins to start a recruitment drive in the Mediterranean.

"It is important we don't waste the industry's time and the taxpayer money going out to recruit in markets we won't be successful in," he said.

He said that he could not yet be "confident" that such an approach would deliver for the Irish market.

"We need to do the right piece of work.

"No more than when Ireland goes out to market itself internationally, we don't go scattergun."

Industry figures also rejected any assertion that low pay could be blamed for worker shortages.

Sinn Fein TD Imelda Munster pressed Irish Hotels Federation chief executive Tim Fenn on the issue of pay.

He rejected the idea that the industry does not entertain better pay and conditions as part of the solution.

He defended rates of pay, telling politicians that roles "are just not being filled, because the people do not exist".

Some businesses, Mr McGowan said, were closing two days a week due to staffing pressures.

Mr McGowan asked: "Are we going to be able to staff it, when the summer does come along?"

**Load-Date:** April 6, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees to take part in Eurovision handover ceremony in Liverpool*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:678Y-4YT1-JBNF-W33C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

January 10, 2023 Tuesday 1:19 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 473 words

**Byline:** Alex Green

**Highlight:** The international music competition will take place in the city in May.

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have settled in [*Liverpool*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liverpool) and local schoolchildren will take part in the Eurovision Song Contest handover and allocation draw at the end of the month.

The international music show will take place at the 11,000-capacity Liverpool Arena in May, culminating in the grand final on Saturday 13, after the city was chosen to host the competition on behalf of 2022 winners Ukraine.

Presenters [*Rylan Clark*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rylan-clark) and [*AJ Odudu*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/aj-odudu) will host the live draw from Liverpool on January 31, assisted by young people from a local school and members of the Ukrainian community who have been living in the city since the Russian invasion.

In front of a live audience and on BBC Two, Clark and Odudu, both 34, will announce which of the two semi-finals each country will be competing in.

They will also confirm which semi-final the so-called “big five” countries plus Ukraine will vote in.

As 2022 winner, Ukraine automatically qualifies for the grand final alongside the UK, France, Germany, Italy and [*Spain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/spain) – who each get a free pass because of their financial contributions to the event.

A total of 37 countries are set to take part in Eurovision this year, which will be hosted by the BBC.

Thirty-one will go into the draw for the semi-finals, with 10 from each semi-final progressing to the grand final on May 13.

The programme on January 31 will also see Stefano Lo Russo, the mayor of 2022 host city [*Turin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/turin) , hand over the official keys of the contest, known as the Insignia, to the mayor of Liverpool, Joanne Anderson.

During the evening the look and slogan from each contestant will also be unveiled.

Clark said: “From being part of the UK delegation since 2018, Eurovision has become such a big part of my life.

Get ready for [*#Eurovision*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Eurovision?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) 2023! Join [*@Rylan*](https://twitter.com/Rylan?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) and [*@AJOdudu*](https://twitter.com/AJOdudu?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) for the Handover and Allocation Draw, where we'll find out which countries are competing in which Semi-Final Live from Liverpool, Tuesday 31st January at 7pm on [*@BBCTwo*](https://twitter.com/BBCTwo?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) and [*@BBCiPlayer*](https://twitter.com/BBCiPlayer?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*https://t.co/eN76FXEYFa*](https://t.co/eN76FXEYFa) [*pic.twitter.com/kougp61wZt*](https://t.co/kougp61wZt) — BBC Eurovision (@bbceurovision) [*January 10, 2023*](https://twitter.com/bbceurovision/status/1612735847635517440?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

“I’m so excited to be presenting the handover and allocation draw which symbolises the start of the Eurovision Song Contest 2023; the year in which the United Kingdom hosts Ukraine’s party.

“It’s going to be an amazing year for Eurovision. I genuinely can’t wait.”

Odudu said: “It’s so exciting to have the Eurovision Song Contest in the United Kingdom in 2023.

“New and existing fans are in for an event like no other come May, with spectacular live shows on the BBC and a city takeover in Liverpool, all with British creativity and Ukrainian culture at its core.

“I can’t wait to kick things off with the draw later this month.”

January 31 will also see the launch of the BBC’s Eurovision podcast, Eurovisioncast, made by the team behind its Newscast and Ukrainecast.

**Load-Date:** January 10, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Sir Rod Stewart rents home for family of seven Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66MY-GGS1-JBNF-W116-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

October 18, 2022 Tuesday 1:21 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 367 words

**Byline:** Mike Bedigan

**Highlight:** The singer said he usually keeps ‘all my charitable efforts nice and quiet,’ but hoped making his actions public, they might inspire others to help.

**Body**

Sir [*Rod Stewart*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rod-stewart) says he is using his “power” as a knight to help others, after renting a home for a family of seven ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

The singer said he usually keeps “all my charitable efforts nice and quiet,” but hoped that by making his actions public, they might inspire others to help too.

Sir Rod has provided support to Ukrainian couple Rostylsav and Olena and their five children, paying rent and bills for the [*Berkshire*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/berkshire) property for at least a year, according to The Mirror.

The family, who arrived in the UK without speaking any [*English*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/english) , are “lovely… so polite” and “all very grateful”, Sir Rod said.

“It just makes me want to do more. I am thinking of getting another house now and getting a lot more people over,” he told The Mirror.

“I usually keep all my charitable efforts nice and quiet and just do it. But I thought, ‘I am a knight, I have been given this knighthood because of the things I’ve achieved in my life and the charity work I’ve done over the years.’

“But that was the past; I want to be seen to be doing something now. I am a knight, I should be using my power to do something for people.

“I am sure that if there are people out there who see what I am doing, they will pick up some slack too.”

According to The Mirror, Sir Rod and his wife [*Penny Lancaster*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/penny-lancaster) were inspired to act after witnessing the unfolding events of the ongoing war in Ukraine on the news.

I usually keep all my charitable efforts nice and quiet and just do it. But I thought, 'I am a knight, I have been given this knighthood because of the things I've achieved in my life and the charity work I've done over the years'

Sir Rod Stewart

The singer also hired three trucks filled with supplies for refugees and had them driven to Ukraine, before using the same vehicles to transport 16 people back to safety in Berlin.

He was later put in contact with Rostyslav and his family, as well as others who he has since given jobs to.

Next month will see Sir Rod kick off a string of UK arena dates, playing in Nottingham, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Belfast, [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london) , Birmingham and Manchester.

He told The Mirror that he plans to address the conflict in Ukraine as part of the tour, dedicating shows to the country and its people.

**Load-Date:** October 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: Labour's refusal to back an open door policy for Ukrainian refugees is shameful*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X0-0XG1-JBNF-W10V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 2, 2022 Wednesday 11:39 AM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:1

**Length:** 765 words

**Byline:** Harriet Williamson

**Highlight:** Refugees Welcome: We might expect this sort of mealy-mouthed obfuscation from the Tories - but Labour can and should do better

**Body**

It's bad news for [*Labour*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/labour) when there are Tories taking a more compassionate position on the burgeoning refugee crisis caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It is a particularly shameful moment for the party.

On Monday's BBC Newsnight, senior Tory MP [*Jeremy Hunt*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jeremy-hunt) was asked whether he supported an "open door" policy for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, which would mirror the one adopted by the EU. [*He said:*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-war-refugees-uk-eu-labour-b2025568.html?utm_content=Echobox&utm_medium=Social&utm_campaign=Main&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1646130543) "Yes, and I expect we will get something like that in the next couple of days from the prime minister."

On the same programme, Labour's shadow minister for international development, Preet Kaur Gill, was asked the same question. She responded, "Well, look, we need a very simplified process", and went on to talk about shadow Home Secretary Yvette Cooper pressing and correcting her equivalent, Priti Patel, in the Commons.

When asked again, Gill said: "What we're saying is we need a simplified scheme. We've already got the Hong Kong one, it's working really well. We need to have something very similar to that."

A "simplified process", when terrified families are forced to flee a deadly, catastrophic invasion? It's just not good enough.

We might expect this sort of mealy-mouthed obfuscation from the Tories - the party of [*Kevin Foster,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-russia-crisis-kyiv-tory-mp-b2024163.html) who reckoned (in a now-deleted tweet) that ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** should apply for seasonal work visas, presumably so they can pick fruit in the UK, and the callous Nationality and Borders Bill that sought to [*criminalise Ukrainians*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/borders-bill-ukrainians-war-russia-b2023968.html) making their own way to the UK in search of safety, flouting the Refugee Convention that Britain helped draw up.

But Labour can and should do better.

Let's face it, the party under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership wouldn't be making wishy-washy statements about "simplified processes". Responding to the plight of people fleeing conflict and brutality with openness, compassion and humanity would have been the priority. There can be no doubt about this, even in the minds of the most vociferous Corbyn critics.

Keir Starmer has made much of the fact that the party is now under "new management", even using the crisis in Ukraine as an opportunity to [*punish and threaten left-wing MPs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/starmer-labour-mps-nato-russia-b2025240.html). He might be concerned about winning back the so-called Red Wall voters lost to Brexit, but his approach has created an empty, value-less Labour Party - a void where principle should be, wrapped in the Union Jack. Labour is apparently "the party of Nato" again, but its other core values are now anyone's guess.

Advised by Peter Mandelson, Starmer has taken increasing cues from the New Labour approach, after being elected leader on a socialist platform and promising to continue the work of his predecessor. He played one record, won the leadership and seamlessly began to play an entirely different one.

In one way, it's unsurprising that Starmer's Labour hasn't thrown its weight behind the most compassionate and humanitarian position - that's just not what Labour's about under this new management. Instead of shouting "[*refugees welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) !" from the rooftops, Labour mumbles "some refugees welcome under a simplified scheme".

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment, sign up to our free weekly Voices Dispatches newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

Currently, the government is offering sanctuary to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** with family members already in the UK. They have widened the criteria to include non-immediate family members such as grandparents, adult children, siblings and elderly parents. In a separate scheme, UK citizens and companies will be able to sponsor ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who want to live here, even if none of their family members already do so. It's unclear what this will look like or when it will be introduced.

The government's plan compares very unfavourably to the position of the EU, which is offering to accept all ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, with or without visas, for up to three years.

Whatever Patel told MPs in the Commons, this is not a "very generous" or "expansive" or "unprecedented" package. It's not enough. We know it's not enough - we can see the pictures and videos on social media of people bloodied and terrified, mothers sleeping on the floor of refugee shelters, clutching small children. It's heart-wrenching, terrifying, painful - the only response can be of generosity, empathy, support and "what can we do to help?"

If Labour can't bring itself to be the opposition party that truly stands with Ukraine by welcoming its people in their hour of need, whether they have visas or not, then it's not an alternative to the Tories. It's pointless - an empty shell.

**Load-Date:** March 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Scottish 'super sponsor' scheme for Ukrainian refugees sees 570 visas granted*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6574-X1B1-JBNF-W48R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 14, 2022 Thursday 12:39 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 282 words

**Byline:** Neil Pooran

**Highlight:** The latest data shows there have been 1,620 visas relating to Scottish sponsors.

**Body**

A total of 570 visas have been issued under the [*Scottish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scottish) Government's super sponsor scheme for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, among 1,620 visas relating to Scottish sponsors.

The latest data shows there have been 55,600 visa applications as part of the UK-wide [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine scheme, with 25,100 visas issued.

Under the separate Ukraine Family Scheme, 39,100 applications have been made and 31,400 visas have been issued.

The devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales have offered to act as "super sponsors" in the Homes for Ukraine scheme, providing temporary accommodation initially before finding more permanent homes for people fleeing the war.

[*Scottish Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scottish-government) minister Neil Gray has been given special responsibility for refugees arriving from Ukraine.

He has previously said the UK Government's pace of approving visas was "glacial", and on Thursday he said progress in approving the visa applications must continue.

Mr Gray said: "While there has been progress in the number of visas approved by the [*UK Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk-government) , we need to see it continue.

"We have consistently said that the pace at which the Home Office was moving on visas was simply not good enough, and while we recognise changes have been made we will continue to press the UK Government to do all it can to speed up their approval processes.

"The Scottish Government established itself as a 'super sponsor' to get the people of Ukraine to safety quickly, and the frustratingly slow pace has worked against that aim.

"As the brutal war in Ukraine continues, and millions have fled their homes, we will continue with the vital work of offering a warm [*Scots*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scots) welcome to all Ukrainians who wish to find safety and sanctuary in Scotland."

**Load-Date:** April 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Health secretary could not 'offer the time' to host Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650J-98R1-DY4H-K0M8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 3:52 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 911 words

**Byline:** Geraldine Scott

**Highlight:** Sajid Javid said he has donated to the Disasters Emergency Committee appeal for Ukraine

**Body**

[*Sajid Javid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sajid-javid) said it would be difficult for him to "offer the time" to host ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in his home as he urged those considering signing up to help to be sure they can "fulfil the obligations" of the scheme.

Housing and communities minister [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) will set out later the details of a new programme through which people in the UK can offer to host ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in their homes.

[*Families*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/families) will receive a thank you payment of £350 a month and be expected to commit to a minimum of six months of housing an individual or a group.

But the[*health secretary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/health-secretary) said if help cannot be provided this way, there are other methods of offering support.

Mr Javid was asked on BBC Breakfast whether he would consider hosting refugees in his home.

"I'm starting to have a conversation with my wife on that and I think many households - as you say, and I'm pleased you brought this up - are probably thinking about this across the country," he said.

"It's important that anyone that becomes a host, that they can fulfil the obligations of a host, that they can spend time with these families and help, but there are many ways that we can all help and whatever I do at a personal level, I will most certainly be helping."

Mr Javid told LBC that he has donated to the Disasters Emergency Committee appeal for Ukraine.

And he told ITV's Good Morning Britain: "I do think, for me personally, it will be hard to offer the time that I think a host would reasonably (be) expected to have available to help the family that's arriving, to help to integrate them into British society."

Later today you'll be able to sign up for the government's Homes for Ukraine Scheme. It's something tangible we can do to help those fleeing for their livesI urge everyone who can to help- Matt Hancock (@MattHancock) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/MattHancock/status/1503297158388371456?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Downing Street indicated that the prime minister will not be taking any ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in at No 10.The prime minister's official spokesman said it was down to individual ministers whether they chose to give accommodation to a refugee."There are specific challenges around security on housing people in No 10," the spokesman said."Various ministers have been asked about this. Obviously it will come down to individual circumstances. This is a significant commitment."We've spent the past few weeks as a family discussing the devastating situation in Ukraine, and so we intend to apply today to join other UK households in offering our home to provide refuge to Ukrainians until it is safe for them to return to their country.- Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP (@grantshapps) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/grantshapps/status/1503345613987057668?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Transport secretary Grant Shapps said he would apply to join the hosting scheme.

In a tweet he said: "We've spent the past few weeks as a family discussing the devastating situation in Ukraine, and so we intend to apply today to join other UK households in offering our home to provide refuge to Ukrainians until it is safe for them to return to their country."

On Sunday, Mr Gove, was asked if he would take in a Ukrainian refugee.

He told the BBC's Sunday Morning programme: "I'm exploring what I can do, I know that there are others who have. Without going into my personal circumstances, there are a couple of things I need to sort out - but yes."

He said there are potentially "hundreds of thousands of people" in the UK willing to take Ukrainians into their homes through the Government's new sponsorship scheme, which he is due to outline on Monday.

Mr Javid was asked on ITV's [*Good Morning Britain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/good-morning-britain) whether, instead of Britons offering up space, it would be better if the mansions of sanctioned Russian oligarchs were the first place considered.

He said: "Not the first place - I don't think it would be practical to make them the first place - but I do know that that is something that my friend Michael Gove is looking at.

"I think there'll be some legal hurdles to try and do that, but it's right that he looks broadly to see how we can house more and more ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***."

Mr Javid said it is a "sensible approach" to allow Britons to offer refugees places to stay.

"This is an unprecedented situation," he said. "There are, as we've seen across Europe, many millions of refugees and it's right that Britain plays its role and that we have a scheme that allows British families to play their part and to offer sanctuary."

London mayor Sadiq Khan said it would be a form of "poetic justice" to repurpose the mansions.

He told Times Radio: "I, for some time, with others, have been complaining about those Russian oligarchs close to (Vladimir) Putin, using our city to launder money by buying homes or businesses. And what's doubly heart-breaking about the homes they buy is they're left empty for years. They're not homes, they're gold bricks used to launder money.

"I think the Government should be seizing them, and before selling them - because they'll take some time - they should be using them to house those Ukrainians who are fleeing Ukraine, who we'll be offering a safe haven in London.

"It's a form of poetic justice, but also it's a good use of these many, many empty properties sitting across London simply with dust being gathered inside rather than them being used to house people who need homes."

Asked if he would be willing to host a refugee, Mr Khan told Good Morning Britain: "Personally we won't be able to because of space and other security issues, but I admire the generosity of those Londoners, and we know our city is a very generous city."

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Animal welfare charity raises £35,000 to help pets of Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YN-RTK1-JBNF-W1G4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 10, 2022 Thursday 11:34 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 497 words

**Byline:** Danielle Desouza

**Highlight:** Nadine Kayser, the chief executive of Underdog International, said she received 700 parcels in one day.

**Body**

An animal welfare charity has thanked the [*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) public after raising £35,000 to support ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***' pets arriving in [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania).

Dogs, cats and even snakes have featured in images and reports from war-torn Ukraine, with many people fleeing the conflict by heading to [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) or Romania - where they can stay with their pets.

Underdog International launched a fundraiser on February 26 - two days after [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) invades its neighbour - to support non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Romania working with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and their pets.

It created an online wishlist which included "pet food, medical kits for animals and for humans and baby nappies" and was inundated with packages within hours.

"We had to freeze the Amazon wishlist because we literally received 2,000 parcels within 48 hours," chief executive Nadine Kayser told the PA news agency.

Elmtree Pet Hotel in north London allowed Underdog International to use its daycare building to sort the parcels.

Two vans filled with supplies have already been driven to borders in Romania and the charity plans to send two vans per week for the foreseeable future.

The first arrived at the Iasi border last Friday to help Way of Freedom, a dog NGO, and the second arrived on Wednesday to assist Saved by the Vet Romania, which rescues, rehabilitates and rehouses abandoned dogs and cats.

Underdog International has also raised £35,000 to send to its Romanian partners - including a Romanian shelter, Save our Paws - and to buy supplies.

The founder of Save our Paws, and a vet, Emma, has been going into refugee camps to hand out leaflets written in English and Ukrainian, which say: "Don't give up your pet, we're here to help."

"It's got phone numbers on it so they can call if their pet is sick, which is quite common as the pets have had to be dragged or carried for hundreds of miles," Ms Kayser added.

As the refugee camps are busy, it is not ideal for dogs and cats to be "running about everywhere", so Underdog International sent Emma £3,000 to buy some crates to minimise the risk of animals being separated from their owners.

Ms Kayser said Emma has also been issuing pet passports at Iasi.

"There are thousands and thousands of people streaming through" as people use the border to travel to other parts of Europe, Ms Kayser said.

"Quite often, what we're seeing is people, at that point, realise that they can't take their pets with them on the plane.

"Emma is able to issue pet passports immediately.

"She microchips; she does all the legal and medical things required to get the animal a European pet passport, which means that they can actually travel," she added.

The 47-year-old from north London, who has three rescue dogs, said: "I think anyone who has had an animal knows that they are a part of your family. It is so hard to just leave them."

The wishlist has since been reopened, with a particular need for medical equipment and baby care items. Underdog International is also accepting donations on its website.

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees in UK forced to register homeless*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:653W-T1V1-F072-4088-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 30, 2022 Wednesday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 7

**Length:** 817 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

Newly arrived ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are registering as homeless in the UK, leaving local councils to "pick up the pieces" and arrange emergency housing for them with no additional funding from central government.

Families who have fled the Russian invasion and been granted visas through the Ukraine family scheme are arriving in Britain without anywhere to stay because their relatives do not have space in their homes to house them, leaving local authorities and charities to "scramble" to find them alternative housing.

No funding is provided to councils under the scheme because the presumption is that refugees will stay with their relatives. The Local Government Association (LGA), which represents 350 councils across England and Wales, has said local authorities are seeing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** presenting as homeless, and is calling on ministers to provide funding to support them.

Under a separate visa scheme, which was launched by the government on 18 March and allows Ukrainians without family members in the UK to be hosted by members of the British public, councils are given £10,500 per refugee in the first year.

An LGA spokesperson told The Independent: "Councils would like the same arrangements to be in place for the family visa route as the Homes for Ukraine scheme. This includes advance notice of new arrivals and the funding to support them when they are here. We are also discussing with government whether it would be possible to match new arrivals with sponsors registered under the Homes for Ukraine scheme if they cannot stay with their family."

Oleksandr Polishchuk, a volunteer at the Support Ukraine charity, which is based in west London, said he had come across dozens of Ukrainians who have arrived in recent weeks and did not have accommodation and have been placed in emergency accommodation by local councils. He described one case of an elderly couple and a 96-year-old mother of one of them, who came to join their daughter but who could not fit into her studio flat.

"She was already living there with her two young children. They went there at first but it was unsustainable and unbearable. They picked up their bags and arrived at Victoria coach station and came to us. They had nowhere to stay. They are now being housed by the council," he said.

"We try to help and direct people as much as we can. There is immediate need. We need to place them overnight somewhere. That has been a struggle, but we are managing somehow. The government issued a policy, but local councils are not prepared. The system is not in place. We are working with them closely and trying to figure out solutions."

Mr Polishchuk added: "No one expected the scheme to be working properly immediately after the war started, but people are arriving here now. They often don't know English. They don't understand what is happening or what to expect. It is chaotic. Councils want to provide support, but they are so unprepared which makes it difficult. They are scrambling to get things together. They've been left to pick up the pieces."

A spokesperson for London Councils, which represents London boroughs, said: "As people fleeing the conflict in Ukraine have started to arrive in London, boroughs are seeing numbers of people presenting as homeless and are providing appropriate accommodation and support. We are working with government to discuss how best to care for and support arrivals while balancing existing pressures."

Charlie Richards, a volunteer with the Ukrainian Centre in Reading, said some Ukraine family visa holders who cannot stay with their relatives had started to move in with people informally offering to host, raising safeguarding concerns. "My huge concern is that these informal hosts are not flagged to the council. Those people aren't checked for safeguarding. The council is trying to do the right thing, but all the issues are with the Department for Levelling Up and the Home Office."

A government spokesperson said:"The Ukraine family scheme is helping thousands of people fleeing horrific persecution in Ukraine be reunited with family in the UK. Our expectation is people arriving through the family scheme will be initially supported by their loved ones, so they can find work and integrate into the UK. In the exceptional case someone is left without support from their families, Ukrainians will be able to access local council support."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, click here. To sign the petition click here. If you would like to donate then please click here for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 29, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Refugee charity raises £50,000 to help Ukrainian refugees entering Moldova*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YR-2YX1-JBNF-W2V6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 10, 2022 Thursday 7:39 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 519 words

**Byline:** Danielle Desouza

**Highlight:** Refugee Support Europe launched a fundraiser on February 28 to offer support to Ukrainians fleeing their country.

**Body**

A refugee charity has raised £50,000 to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** entering [*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova) , as more than 100,000 people fleeing their homes have arrived in the country.

[*Refugee*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugee) Support Europe launched a fundraiser on February 28 to offer support to Ukrainians seeking refuge in Moldova. Within nine days, they reached their £50,000 target.

Paul Hutchings, 54, chief executive of the charity, arrived in Moldova on March 10, and said he hopes to use the funds to help those in need through food, shelter and transport.

"It's really going to depend on what we find, but what we want to try and do is help those immediately on the move, which is really what we specialise in," said Mr Hutchings.

He added: "We want to try and find out where the gaps are and fill them, whether they need food, hot drinks, somewhere to sit, internet or transport."

Mr Hutchings said the fundraiser was aimed at helping Moldova because it "is a small country with very few resources".

"It's a lot more remote and hard to get into and also harder to work in," he added.

"And so for all of those reasons, it makes it a more challenging place to help and that feels like the right place to go to because people are crossing over.

"Given the few resources that there are in Moldova and how hard it is to get to, the need and opportunity to help people is a lot greater."

[*United Nations*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/united-nations) Moldova reported that as of Thursday, more than 250,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have crossed the country's border, with 100,000 choosing to remain.

In order to have the most impact in the country, Mr Hutchings said his team are going to start by talking to other organisations who conduct similar work.

We're going to be getting into a car and literally driving to places where we hear that there may be an issue and then going there, assessing it ourselves, talking to people that are there, having a look at what is being delivered and then seeing again if there's an opportunity to help there

Paul Hutchings

He said they also hope to speak to people in businesses, local Moldovan people and people in larger humanitarian organisations to "try and figure out what they're doing, what they see as the gaps, and then it's a bit of legwork".

He added: "We're going to be getting into a car and literally driving to places where we hear that there may be an issue and then going there, assessing it ourselves, talking to people that are there, having a look at what is being delivered and then seeing again if there's an opportunity to help there."

Mr Hutchings has been joined by two members from Refugee Support Europe, with two more planning to arrive on Sunday and a further two the following week.

He added: "[*Accommodation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/accommodation) is an issue. We don't want to take up space that is needed for other people," he said.

"We also want to try and work with local communities. We don't want to have too many of us flying in from around the world, when actually the best thing is to try and support local communities and civil society that is already here."

Despite only being in Moldova a short time, Mr Hutchings said he had already witnessed "evidence of a good, strong civil society response".

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Vodafone to offer free mobile connectivity to 200,000 Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y8-51B1-JBNF-W04K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 1:36 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 315 words

**Byline:** Martyn Landi

**Highlight:** The mobile operator said it would offer Sim cards with 20GB of free data each month for six months, as well as access to free calls and texts.

**Body**

[*Vodafone*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vodafone) will offer free connectivity to 200,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving in the UK, the company has said as it urged charities preparing to welcome those fleeing the Russian invasion to get in touch.

The mobile operator said registered charities can apply for access to the free connectivity - which comes in the form of Sim cards with 20GB of free data every month for six months, as well as free international calls and texts - as part of its charities.connected scheme.

The firm has also launched a 'tech appeal' for refugees and has asked individuals and businesses to donate their old smartphones, tablets or laptops, which will be gifted to those in need.

This is a terrible situation and we must all do what we can to help

Ahmed Essam, Vodaphone UK chief executive

It said it has launched the scheme with a donation of 3,000 smartphones - including connectivity - and 1,000 portable power banks worth more than a million pounds.

Vodafone said offering connectivity to those arriving in the UK from Ukraine was vital in order to help them not only stay in touch with friends and family back home but also to access further support, mental health services and healthcare.

"We are calling on charities to get in touch so we can prepare and deliver Sim cards for refugees who are and will be arriving in the UK from Ukraine," Vodafone UK chief executive Ahmed Essam said.

"This is a terrible situation and we must all do what we can to help."

The mobile operator has already made calls and texts to Ukraine free for its customers and waived roaming charges for customers within Ukraine, a step a number of other networks have also taken.

In addition, Vodafone has confirmed it will match donations to the DEC Humanitarian Appeal through the [*British Red Cross*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british-red-cross) , with a minimum contribution of £250,000 coming from the company, with the public able to donate £10 by texting "Vodafone" to 70141.

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Some Ukrainian refugees returning home ‘because savings running out’*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67M4-8Y11-JBNF-W4PJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 22, 2023 Wednesday 2:51 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 734 words

**Byline:** Patrick Daly

**Highlight:** The Foreign Office said Ukrainians displaced by Russia’s invasion were starting to return to their homes despite the risks involved.

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are returning to their homes because, in some cases, they are running out of money, according to [*Foreign Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/foreign-office) officials.

Millions of people have been displaced in the eastern European country following [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) president Vladimir Putin’s invasion of Ukraine, which started in February 2022.

While western countries, including the UK, took in those refugees fleeing the conflict, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) said the humanitarian picture now included providing for those going back to their homeland.

What we’ve been hearing here (in Ukraine) is that numerous displaced people have been returning to their places of origin or nearby cities

Fred Robarts, FCDO humanitarian adviser

Some who moved to other areas of Ukraine while their neighbourhood was transformed into the frontline are also beginning to return to “their places of origin or nearby cities”, despite the risks involved and lack of basic services available.

Urban areas like [*Kharkiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kharkiv) , Ukraine’s second-largest city, situated in the north-east of the war-torn country, witnessed intense fighting in the opening months of the invasion and continues to be shelled by the Kremlin’s troops.

But, with the year anniversary of the conflict set to be marked on Friday, the threat of Russian missiles has not put people off from returning to the city, officials said.

Foreign Office humanitarian adviser Fred Robarts, speaking from [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) , told reporters on Wednesday: “What we’ve been hearing here is that numerous displaced people have been returning to their places of origin or nearby cities, like Kharkiv, despite the evident risks and the high levels of destruction in those places and the shortage of basic services.

“And the reason for that is they are running out of savings.

“Obviously it is more complex than that, but that is driving some of those returns.”

The FCDO was reluctant to put a figure on the numbers of people returning.

Alex Stevens, group head of the Ukraine humanitarian team at the FCDO, said the latest figures from January 23 suggested that 5.5 million people had been displaced internally by the war, with that number down from 5.9 million in December.

He told reporters: “While some people are returning to their home areas, others continue to move away from the places where conflict is affecting them the most.

“So most of the new displacements are in the east.”

The invasion is also leading to a significant rise in the cost-of-living by limiting livelihood opportunities and straining social services. All of this is of course driving the humanitarian needs

Alex Stevens, FCDO Ukraine humanitarian team

Mr Stevens said there were “widespread” protection concerns for those who had been displaced, including about human rights abuses, sexual violence and the forced deportation and relocation of civilians to Russian-occupied areas and also to mainland Russia.

Those people remaining in the country faced regular attacks on energy and water supplies, the FCDO said.

Officials said there had been 755 verified attacks on healthcare sites during the conflict and 3,000 strikes on education facilities, with 400 destroyed.

In cities and towns reclaimed by Ukrainian armed forces, 90% of buildings had been damaged or destroyed.

Mr Stevens added: “The invasion is also leading to a significant rise in the cost-of-living by limiting livelihood opportunities and straining social services.

“All of this is of course driving the humanitarian needs.

“The reduced incomes and insecurity are also forcing people to adopt harmful coping strategies.

“That includes reducing how much they eat and how much they spend on medicines and utilities.”

Health services in Ukraine were under “immense strain”, Mr Stevens said, with 26% of people reporting a lack of access to essential medicines and care.

On top of the assaults on public facilities, Mr Stevens said it was estimated that 30% of Ukraine — an area twice the size of [*Austria*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/austria) — was contaminated with “unexploded ordnance and landmines”, presenting a challenge for aid efforts and population safety.

The UK has provided £220 million for the humanitarian response in Ukraine, with the money being deployed through the United Nations, Red Cross and other non-government organisations.

Mr Robarts said the funding made the UK one of the largest bilateral donors when it came to humanitarian aid, with its contribution helping to reach 13 million people.

**Load-Date:** February 22, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees safe, but not at peace, after year of war*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67K1-6WC1-JBNF-W3P3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 17, 2023 Friday 7:34 AM GMT

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**Length:** 1308 words

**Byline:** Vanessa Gera

**Highlight:** Nearly a year has passed since the Feb. 24, 2022, invasion sent millions of people fleeing across Ukraine’s border into neighboring countries

**Body**

Months after Russian forces occupied the region of [*Kherson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kherson) in eastern [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) last year, they started paying visits to the home of a Ukrainian woman and her Russian husband. They smashed their refrigerator and demanded possession of their car. One day, they seized the wife and her teenage daughter, put pillowcases over their heads and led them away.

The woman was locked up for days, her legs beaten with a hammer. The men accused her of revealing Russian soldiers’ locations. They subjected her to electric shocks and bore down on her feet with the heels of their military boots until two of her toes broke. She heard screams nearby and feared they came from her daughter.

More than once, with a bag on her head and her hands tied, a weapon was pointed at her head. She'd feel the muzzle at her temple, and a man started counting.

One. Two. Two and a half.

Then, a shot fired to the floor.

“Although at that moment, it seemed to me that it would be better in my head,” she told The Associated Press, recounting the torture that lasted five days, counted by the sliver of sunlight from a tiny window in the room. “The only thing that kept me strong was the awareness that my child was somewhere around.”

The Russian officials eventually released the woman and her daughter, she said, and she made her way home. She took a long shower and packed a bag, and the two fled the occupied area — first to Russian-occupied Crimea, then mainland Russia where they crossed by land into Latvia and finally Poland.

Her body was still bruised, and she could barely walk. But in December in [*Warsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warsaw) , she reunited with a son. And she and her daughter joined the refugees who have fled their homes since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Nearly a year has passed since the Feb. 24, 2022, invasion sent millions fleeing across Ukraine’s border into neighboring Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Moldova and Romania. Crowds of terrified, exhausted people boarded trains and waited for days at border crossings.

Across Europe, about 8 million refugees have been recorded, according to U.N. estimates based on data from national governments, and nearly 5 million of those have applied for temporary protection. Experts say those numbers are fluid — some people apply in more than one country — but they agree it's the largest movement of refugees in Europe since World War II. Unlike refugees from recent conflicts in the Middle East and Africa, the Ukrainians were largely met with an outpouring of sympathy and help.

Yet while the ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have found safety, they have not found peace.

They suffer from trauma and loss — uprooted from their lives, separated from relatives, fearing for loved ones stuck in Russian-occupied areas or fighting on the frontline. Children are separated from fathers, grandparents, pets. Others have no family or homes to return to.

The woman from Kherson spoke to [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) this month at a Warsaw counseling center run in sponsorship with UNICEF. She insisted on anonymity; she fears for the safety of her husband and other relatives in Russian-occupied areas.

She doesn’t like to talk about herself. But she has a goal: For the world to see what Russian troops are doing.

“Even now, I am afraid,” she said, wiping her eyes with her pastel-color nails and fiddling over a tissue. “Do you understand?”

She is among the refugees seeking trauma treatment, most often from Ukrainian psychologists who themselves fled home and struggle with their own grief and loss. No agency has definitive numbers on refugees in treatment, but experts say the psychological toll of the conflict is vast, with rates of anxiety and depression skyrocketing.

At the Warsaw center, psychologists describe treating crying children, teenagers separated from everything they know, mothers unknowingly transferring trauma to their kids.

One patient, a boy from Mariupol, was used as a human shield. His hair has already begun to turn gray. The home of the counselor who treats him was destroyed by a Russian bomb.

Refugee mental health is a priority for aid organizations large and small, even as they work to meet needs for housing, work and education.

Anastasiia Gudkova, a Ukrainian providing psychological support to refugees at a Norwegian Refugee Council reception center in Warsaw, said the most traumatized people she meets come from Mariupol, Kherson and other occupied territories. Those who flee bombing in Kyiv, Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhia also arrive terrified.

But there’s pain for those even from relatively safer areas in western Ukraine, she said: “All Ukrainians, regardless of their location, are under a lot of stress.”

According to the U.N. refugee agency, 90% of the Ukrainians who have sought refuge abroad are women, children and the elderly.

The psychologists see women struggle to put on a brave face for children, trying to survive in countries where they often don’t speak the language. Many women with higher education have taken jobs cleaning other people’s homes or working in restaurant kitchens.

The luckiest ones are able to keep doing their old jobs remotely from exile or are beginning to envision new lives.

Last January, Anastasia Lasna was planning to open her own bakery in Mykolaiv after finding success with providing other businesses with her vegan foods and healthy deserts. Today she is running a food pantry of the Jewish Community Center in Krakow, which has helped some 200,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, and integrating herself into the southern Polish city’s growing Jewish community.

She has Israeli citizenship, but doesn’t want to live in another conflict-scarred land. Joined now in Krakow by her husband and her 6-year-old daughter, she cannot imagine returning to her former home, which has been liberated from Russian occupation but still faces attacks.

“There is no future there,” she said.

But many refugees still dream of returning home. Their belief that Ukraine will eventually prevail helps them cope.

Last Feb. 23, Maryna Ptashnyk was in the Carpathian mountains celebrating her 31st birthday with her husband and daughter. For months, Russian forces had surrounded her country; waves of anxiety came as she pondered whether there would be “a big war.” So she switched off her phone for her special day.

It was the last night of peace for Ukraine, the last night of normality for Ptashnyk. The next morning, her husband, Yevhen, woke her and told her Kyiv was being bombed.

Now Yevhen is in the Ukrainian army, serving in an artillery unit near Soledar in eastern Ukraine, an area of brutal fighting. Ptashnyk lives alone with their 3-year-old daughter, Polina, in a small suburban Warsaw apartment.

Though Polina is settling well into a Polish preschool, her mother sees the stress.

“For the last year she often asks me about death, about when we will die,” she said.

Polina sees other children out with their fathers, but she’s seen hers only three times since the war began. On a recent visit home, she embraced him. “Daddy’s mine,” she said.

For the woman from Kherson, trying to face the trauma from her torture is just one challenge. She also must find work to afford an apartment in Warsaw, which is now home to more ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** than any other city.

The influx of people has exacerbated a housing shortage and caused rental prices to surge amid high inflation — an issue in many countries welcoming refugees.

The mother finds herself struggling to create a home, a sense of normalcy. The physical pain and scars haunt her, but some days the lack of moral support hurts the most.

Her husband's family in Russia supports the invasion. Worst of all, he and other loved ones remain trapped in the Russian-occupied territory.

“I am safe now, but it is very dangerous there," she said. “And I can’t know if they will survive.”

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Follow AP’s coverage of the war in Ukraine: [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** February 17, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Britons keen to host Ukrainian refugees 'must do so for at least six months'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6504-1BF1-JBNF-W1J2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 12, 2022 Saturday 1:54 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 683 words

**Byline:** Amy Gibbons

**Highlight:** Ministers hope most offers through the new sponsorship scheme will come from accommodation providers, according to reports.

**Body**

[*Britons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britons) keen to house ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** under the Government's new sponsorship scheme will need to agree to do so for at least six months, reports suggest.

The current visa route for people fleeing the war in Ukraine is restricted to family members of people settled in the UK.

Another promised route, allowing individuals and companies to sponsor Ukrainians with no ties to the UK to come to the country, is expected to be launched on Monday.

According to the Times, the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) has decided people who want to offer a home to those fleeing the war under the new scheme will need to commit to a six-month contract.

The newspaper cited a Government source as saying: "It's about making sure we have secure offers.

"Unfortunately it's going to need to be a long-term scheme as it doesn't look like they'll be going home any time soon."

The Times said ministers hope the bulk of offers to the sponsorship scheme will come from accommodation providers such as hotels, B&Bs and landlords, to bring in as many people as possible.

Hosts and their properties will need to pass safeguarding checks, after which they will be matched with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Poland by [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) officials, it said.

The Times said Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer would take in a Ukrainian refugee himself.

"If necessary (I would), as many people would... I think we're a very welcoming nation," he told the newspaper.

It comes after the Government was reported to have come under fire from French President [*Emmanuel Macron*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/emmanuel-macron) for its policy on ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

According to the Guardian, at the end of an EU summit in Versailles on Friday, Mr Macron said insisting visa applications to the UK were made in person in Brussels and Paris had exacerbated circumstances for those fleeing the war.

The Home Office pointed to previous comments by Home Secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) , who said: "We are now making the process quicker and simpler by removing the need to physically visit visa application centres for many of those who are making the perilous journey across Europe."

On Thursday, she announced that from Tuesday people will be able to apply online for a visa and will no longer have to go to a processing centre to give their biometrics.

Nearly 2.6 million people are thought to have fled Ukraine since Russia's invasion on February 24, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) data portal.

There must be a way... of putting the two things together and helping some of the refugees coming over, who may well have the skills that we're looking for

Tony Stein, CEO of Healthcare Management Solutions

Tony Stein, chief executive of Healthcare Management Solutions, suggested on Saturday morning that Ukrainian people fleeing the war could find jobs and a place to live through the UK care sector.

Asked if his business might be interested in taking part in the Government's new sponsorship scheme for refugees, he told BBC Radio 4's Today programme: "Absolutely. I mean, we have a national shortage in the care sector of people. We have many vacancies up and down the country.

"A lot of operators have job-related accommodation. And there must be a way, I think, of putting the two things together and helping some of the refugees coming over, who may well have the skills that we're looking for... they may be nurses or people who've cared before who would be perfectly suited to roles in this country.

"But I think it's not a simple thing to do. You know, clearly there are some issues that we need to address - so if people are coming over with children, for example... the accommodation may not be suited for families, and indeed local authorities might not allow us to house families in some of that accommodation.

"The start point is: have we got accommodation, do we have vacancies? Yes we do. We just now need to work together with local authorities and Government to find out how we can do this."

Home Office minister Baroness Williams of Trafford told peers 1,305 visas for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** had been issued as of Thursday morning, adding: "Those figures are going up rapidly and that is a good thing."

**Load-Date:** March 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Benedict Cumberbatch gives update on housing Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:659R-7GG1-JBNF-W2MY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 26, 2022 Tuesday 5:00 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,FILM,CULTURE; Version:1

**Length:** 455 words

**Byline:** Kerri-Ann Roper

**Highlight:** Actor and his co-stars were promoting their latest film, Marvel's 'Doctor Strange In The Multiverse Of Madness'

**Body**

[*Benedict Cumberbatch*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/benedict-cumberbatch) has spoken about welcoming ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** into his home and being able to "give them some stability after the turmoil that they've experienced".

The 45-year-old has signed up for the Homes For Ukraine scheme, but said the family have not yet moved in and he is "monitoring their progress every day".

Speaking at a London photocall for his new film, Marvel's Doctor Strange In The Multiverse Of Madness, Cumberbatch said: "They've made it out of Ukraine (the family), but I'm monitoring their progress every day.

"Sadly they're undergoing some medical treatment at the moment - to say anything more about that would be an invasion of their privacy, and too much about when they're coming and how that's being managed would invade mine.

"But I want to give them some stability after the turmoil that they've experienced, and that's within my home.

"And then, from outside, I've been trying to help other Ukrainian families and nationals that are UK citizens, to house their extended families en masse, which ... is very costly."

Cumberbatch said that he has been trying to help the family financially "in a couple of instances", along with working with the charity Refugees at Home., which offers further support for the psychological trauma Ukrainians are dealing with as they flee their war-torn homes.

"However gentle and generous and welcoming we are as hosts, we don't have the skills of the mental health profession to necessarily deal with those. I would urge people to seek out further help to bolster their efforts and people are doing an amazing amount."

He added: "It makes me very proud of our country and very proud of what we can be at our best as a human race."

The forthcoming film, directed by [*Sam Raimi*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sam-raimi) , sees Oscar-nominated Cumberbatch reprise his role as neurosurgeon Dr Stephen Strange, alongside a cast that features Chiwetel Ejiofor, [*Elizabeth Olsen*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elizabeth-olsen) , Benedict Wong and Rachel McAdams.

Olsen, who reprises her role as Avenger Wanda Maximoff aka Scarlet Witch, spoke about the return of films to cinemas.

"It's not even just about how it looks or how it sounds, but it's the community aspect, that also is what makes these films special, and nothing makes me feel happier than being at a cinema," she said.

"I didn't even realise how much I missed it until I got it back again. And that's how I got to see The Power Of The Dog (which saw her co-star Cumberbatch nominated for an Oscar) and so it's not just [*Marvel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/marvel) films that need to be seen on screen.

"It's just important to keep the theatres functioning and working, and I'm proud to be part of a film that hopefully can bring some opportunity there."

Doctor Strange In The Multiverse Of Madness is out in UK cinemas on 5 May.

**Load-Date:** April 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees falling victim to ‘extremely sophisticated’ UK visa scam, charities warn*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69YB-G3M1-DY4H-K3X1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

December 25, 2023 Monday 10:03 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 1274 words

**Byline:** Andy Gregory

**Highlight:** Exclusive: Ukrainians are landing at UK airports only to discover that their travel documents and host families are fake

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) are arriving at UK airports with fake [*visas*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/visas) and false promises of [*a Homes for Ukraine sponsor family*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/homes-government-home-office-scottish-national-party-parliament-b2448687.html%22%20title=%22Visa%20uncertainty%20adding%20to%20‘insecurity’%20for%20Ukrainian%20refugees,%20campaigner%20warns) after being targeted by “extremely sophisticated” [*scams*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scams) , charities have warned.

Charities told The Independent that they are dealing with increasing numbers of cases in which Ukrainians have been tricked into paying hundreds of pounds for letters giving them “permission to travel” to the UK and fake British visas, by criminals taking advantage of their desperation to leave.

The visas are impossible to identify as fraudulent by sight, meaning that Ukrainians are permitted to travel by airline staff, only to be told by Border Force that their documents are not valid, according to the charity Settled, which says it is now dealing with between one and five such cases each week.

The Home Office said it is working continuously to identify and prevent this type of fraud, which it blamed on organised crime groups.

Have you been affected by these scams? Email [*andy.gregory@independent.co.uk*](mailto:andy.gregory@independent.co.uk)

While some of these [*fraud*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fraud) victims have landed in a “nightmare limbo” after being classed as illegal migrants and having their passports seized at UK airports, the charity welcomed the fact that Border Force officials now increasingly appear to be granting six-month visas to Ukrainian fraud victims instead.

But the charity is concerned that, despite being granted these discretionary six-month visa stamps, some of the victims are still being left without access to housing and benefits – because councils and Job Centre staff are failing to recognise them as legitimate.

Mariia, whose hometown in eastern [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) is occupied by Russian forces, told Settled she was sent a supposed UK visa and information about her British sponsors after paying around £300 for help with arranging to come to the UK.

“I was sure that [my sponsors] were waiting for me in England,” she said. “But when I arrived at Stansted airport, I discovered that my letter from the Home Office was a fake. The officer stamped my passport with a temporary visa, and told me to go to the local authority where it said my ‘sponsor’ lived.

“When the council said that such a sponsor was not registered with them, I almost fainted. What to do? I had nowhere else to go.”

Mariia was put in a temporary shelter by the Red Cross, which provided her with £30 a week to live on while she struggled for four months to obtain a biometric residence permit. This meant she was unable to work, study, apply for benefits or see a doctor until she eventually received help from Settled.

After first noticing the issue in June, Settled wrote to the Home Office warning that criminals are taking advantage of people’s desperation to leave and their inability to secure a visa by other means.

The government replied in September that it was aware that Ukrainians who were seeking sanctuary under UK schemes were being exploited by organised crime networks, and said that officials across the Home Office, including Border Force, were working to identify and prevent instances such as these.

Settled had urged the Home Office to provide clear guidance for Border Force staff to issue temporary visa stamps to defrauded Ukrainians, and is now calling for greater communications and training to ensure that councils and other authorities recognise these stamps as legitimate.

The charity Opora is also frequently encountering Ukrainians targeted in visa scams, its managing director Stan Benes told The Independent. “It’s safe to say that we get two to three messages from people in these positions every week,” he said.

“We try to make it as clear as possible in our communications that the Ukraine scheme visas are free, and that people need to have connected with a legitimate UK-based sponsor to apply. We always advise people to speak to their prospective hosts to get to know them and, ideally, to video call at least once.”

It is also common for the scammers to tell refugees to enter the UK through Dublin, or Ireland more generally, since Ukrainians aren’t always aware that Ireland isn’t part of the UK, Mr Benes said.

Yuliia Ismail, a Ukraine schemes adviser at Settled, agreed that being told to travel via Ireland or by car, rather than taking a direct flight, is among several “red flags” Ukrainians should be aware of, as well as being unaware of their sponsor’s identity prior to departure.

“As a caseworker, I am working with this on a daily basis,” Ms Ismail said.

Warning that increasing numbers of refugees appear to be being targeted, Chris Keppie of Settled suggested that this could be because Ukrainians are struggling to secure Homes for Ukraine sponsors, with fewer UK hosts volunteering.

Criminals are also possibly realising this and “getting more organised”, he said, adding that some scam victims have previously lived in areas near the Zaporizhzhia power plant – where international fears of a nuclear disaster [*intensified this summer*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-zaporizhzhia-nuclear-plant-b2163943.html) – and suggested that this could indicate that people’s “real sudden panic and desperation” was being particularly exploited.

The British Red Cross also told The Independent that it was aware of a small number of cases in which UK hosts have paid for Ukrainian families to travel to the UK with a particular offer of work when they arrive.

But upon their arrival, they discover that the employment conditions are vastly different from what was first agreed. In some cases, children are discouraged from attending school, and the family is made to work in a way that is not compatible with a fair working arrangement, a spokesperson said.

“We have also heard this being the case in situations where the added cost of living (utility bills, food costs) associated with hosting a family is used as the reason to put people to work in an exploitative way,” they said.

Other charities have previously warned of hosts charging refugees rent and excessive payments towards bills. However, of more than 80 councils contacted by The Independent, just six said they had encountered alleged fraud by people posing as Homes for Ukraine sponsors.

A recent change in the rules, which requires Ukrainians applying for a UK visa to attend an application centre in person, could in the longer term help counter these scams, Mr Keppie said.

But, adding that it is still very early days, he said: “We are certainly still seeing people who are victims of fraud arriving in the UK.

“Of course, this change will only help if people are fully aware of the UK process – sadly not always likely for vulnerable people in a war zone ... and so many previous victims of fraud hadn’t been aware that the legitimate UK application process was free.”

A government spokesperson said: “The UK has offered sanctuary to over 249,000 Ukrainians and family members fleeing Putin’s illegal war. Our priority remains continuing to provide a safe and secure haven for those fleeing the conflict.

“The abuse of vulnerable people by organised criminal networks is reprehensible. We have robust measures in place to prevent abuse of the visa application process, including training for our decision-makers on detecting forgeries and the ability to interview applicants to help question their credibility and intentions.”

If you are affected by any of these issues, Settled is a charity that gives free accredited advice in Ukrainian, at [*ukraineadvice@settled.org.uk*](mailto:ukraineadvice@settled.org.uk) It has created online leaflets in Ukrainian [*advising on how to avoid visa scams*](https://settled.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/SETTLED-UKRAINE-LEAFLET-07-23-2.pdf) , and [*guidance for refugees struggling with UK accommodation*](https://settled.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Settled-Ukraine-homelessness-Ukrainian-online-version.pdf) .

**Load-Date:** December 25, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees at camp in Mexico City await US action*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65C5-16J1-DY4H-K1TJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 3, 2022 Tuesday 5:00 AM GMT

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**Length:** 865 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** On a dusty field on the east side of Mexico's sprawling capital, some 500 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are waiting in large tents under a searing sun for the United States government to tell them they can come

**Body**

On a dusty field on the east side of Mexico's sprawling capital, some 500 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are waiting in large tents under a searing sun for the United States government to tell them they can come.

The camp has only been open a week and 50 to 100 people are arriving every day. Some have already been to the U.S. border in [*Tijuana*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tijuana) where they were told they would no longer be admitted. Others arrived at airports in [*Mexico City*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mexico-city) or Cancun, anywhere they could find a ticket from Europe.

"We are asking the U.S. government to process faster," said Anastasiya [*Polo*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/polo) , co-founder of United with Ukraine, a nongovernmental organization, that collaborated with the Mexican government to establish the camp. She said that after a week's time none of the refugees there "are even close to the end of the program."

The program, Uniting for Ukraine, was announced by the U.S. government April 21. Four days later, Ukrainians showing up at the U.S.-Mexico border were no longer exempted from a pandemic-related rule that has been used to quickly expel migrants without an opportunity to seek asylum for the past two years.

Instead, they would have to apply from Europe or other countries such as Mexico. To qualify people must have been in Ukraine as of Feb. 11; have a sponsor, which could be family or an organization; meet vaccination and other public health requirements; and pass background checks.

Polo said U.S. government officials had told her it should take a week to process people, but it appeared like it was just beginning. Some of the first arrivals had received emails from the U.S. government acknowledging they received their documents and the documents of their sponsors, but she had heard of no sponsors being approved yet.

"These people cannot stay in this camp, because it is temporary," Polo said. More than 100 of the camp's residents are children.

Nearly 5.5 million Ukrainians, mostly women and children, have fled Ukraine since [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) invaded its smaller neighbor on Feb. 24, according to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

Giorgi Mikaberidze, 19, is among the waiting. He arrived in Tijuana April 25 and found the U.S. border closed. He complained that the U.S. government had given so little notice, because many people like himself were already in transit. He went from being just yards from the United States to some 600 miles (966 kilometers) now.

When the U.S. government announced in late March that it would accept up to 100,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, hundreds entered Mexico daily as tourists in Mexico City or Cancun and flew to Tijuana to wait for a few days - eventually only a few hours - to be admitted to the U.S. at a San Diego border crossing on humanitarian parole. Appointments at U.S. consulates in Europe were scarce, and refugee resettlement takes time, making Mexico the best option.

Traveling through Mexico was circuitous, but a loose-knit group of volunteers, largely from Slavic churches in the western United States, greeted refugees at the Tijuana airport and shuttled them to a recreation center that the city of Tijuana made available for several thousand to wait. A wait of two to four days was eventually shortened to a few hours as U.S. border inspectors whisked Ukrainians in.

That special treatment ended the day Mikaberidze arrived in Tijuana.

"We want to go to America because (we're) already here, some don't have even money to go back," he said.

Mikaberidze was visiting relatives in Georgia, south of Ukraine, when the Russian invasion occurred and was not able to return. His mother remains in their village near Kharkhov in eastern Ukraine, afraid to leave her home because Russian troops indiscriminately shoot up cars traveling in the area, he said.

"She said it's a very dangerous situation," said Mikaberidze, who traveled to Mexico alone.

The Mexico City camp provides a safe place to wait. It was erected inside a large sports complex, so Ukrainians could be seen pushing strollers with children along sidewalks, playing soccer and volleyball, even swimming.

However, the refugees have been warned that while they are free to leave the complex, no one is responsible for their safety. Iztapalapa, the capital's most populated borough, is also one of its most dangerous.

The Mexican government was providing security at the camp with about 50 officers, Polo said. The Navy had also set up a mobile kitchen to provide meals.

She said they felt safe inside the camp, but were asking the government about the possibility of moving the camp to a safer area.

Mykhailo Pasternak and his girlfriend Maziana Hzyhozyshyn, waited at the entrance to the complex Monday afternoon. Both suffering from an apparent head cold, they planned to move to a hotel for a day or two to try to get some sleep and recover before returning to the camp.

Pasternak had left the U.S. to help Hzyhozyshyn get in. The two had spent several days in Tijuana before flying to Mexico City and arriving at the camp Sunday.

The couple stood out on the streets of Iztapalapa and appeared to be withering under the relentless sun. The couple had known each other for six years.

"She's my love," Pasternak said.

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[*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) writer Elliot Spagat in San Diego contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** May 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Minister defends use of mass accommodation sites for Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:658M-6741-DY4H-K37H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 21, 2022 Thursday 9:45 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 331 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** Roderic O'Gorman admitted the Government is facing challenges housing those who have fled the war-torn country.

**Body**

Mass accommodation for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** is going to become a larger part of the [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) response to the crisis, a Cabinet minister has said.

Roderic O'Gorman, whose department is leading efforts to house refugees fleeing the war-torn country, admitted the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) is facing challenges with around 25,000 Ukrainians having already arrived in Ireland.

He confirmed the Millstreet Arena in Co Cork is now being used to house 70 refugees.

"The accommodation there is indoor," he said. "It is not tented, it's all indoor."

Mr O'Gorman said such accommodation is "not the preference" but he expects refugees to be there for a "number of weeks".

He added: "It's not the gold standard. It's not what we would like to see everybody living in, but we are in a crisis situation. We're in a European-wide war, and we are doing our very best to provide shelter and provide safety to Ukrainians."

He indicated the limit had been reached on the use of hotel accommodation, as the busy summer tourist season approaches.

The Department of Integration, he said, is now trying to find other accommodation.

He told [*RTE*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rte) radio the Government is speaking to universities and colleges.

"[*Accommodation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/accommodation) like Millstreet, that kind of grouped accommodation, is going to become a larger feature of how we provide for people," the minister said.

"We have to be upfront about that. It's what's been used in many European countries from very early on in this crisis."

Mr O'Gorman said he is aware of calls from various organisations for a national director to co-ordinate the country's response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis.

However, he did not indicate whether such a proposal is being considered.

Speaking on the same programme, the Ukrainian [*Ambassador*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ambassador) to Ireland admitted she has concerns about the use of emergency accommodation.

Larysa Gerasko said: "It's not the best accommodation, even temporarily, but I fully understand that Ireland is facing a challenge, a housing challenge.

"Also, Ireland is a small country."

**Load-Date:** April 21, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Priti Patel apologises over 'frustrating' time taken to grant visas to Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:655V-XGR1-DY4H-K4K4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 8, 2022 Friday 11:43 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:8

**Length:** 645 words

**Byline:** Adam Forrest and May Bulman

**Highlight:** 'Always easy to blame someone else,' says home secretary

**Body**

Home secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) has apologised "with frustration" over the time it is taking for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to arrive in the UK under visa schemes.

However, she denied claims that visa requirements are causing unnecessary delays, insisting the UK will "absolutely see changes in numbers" as work continues.

It comes as [*the latest Home Office figures*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/homes-for-ukraine-scheme-uk-arrivals-b2053862.html%22%20title=%22Less%20than%203%25%20of%20Ukrainians%20applying%20to%20sponsorship%20scheme%20have%20arrived%20in%20UK,%20figures%20show) showed that only 1,200 people fleeing the Russian forces had made it to the UK as part of the Homes for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) sponsorship scheme.

Ms Patel said: "I apologise with frustration myself ... it takes time to start up a new route."

She said it was "always easy to blame someone else" - but insisted that visa system security checks "are not the problem" when it comes to the time it is taking for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to reach the UK.

Around 12,000 people had arrived in the UK under Ukraine visa schemes, according to the latest Home Office figures - with the majority coming under the family scheme available to those with relatives in Britain.

But less than 3 per cent the 43,600 Ukrainians who have applied to come under the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme have been able to arrive in Britain since the route opened three weeks ago.

Around 200,000 Britons have registered to host ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** under the route, but complex applications forms, difficulty finding matches and lengthy delays are slowing down the process.

Yvette Cooper MP, shadow home secretary, said the latest figures were "scandalous and shameful", adding: "Over thirty thousand people with British sponsors waiting are still stuck in limbo - around half of whom have been waiting more than ten days already to hear anything."

She added: "British families have offered Ukrainians sanctuary in their hour of need, but the home secretary is letting everyone down."

Asked about the "huge frustration" among members of the public experiencing three to four week delays in being able to put people up, Ms Patel said: "They're not seeing delays."

The home secretary said security checks needed under the Home Office's visa system were "not the problem" and were "not slowing the process up".

She added: "We are processing and, as I've said as well, I'm streamlining processes. I streamlined the family scheme in less than a week, and we simplified that and we changed the way certain checks are done. Also, I'm working to automate where we can."

The Refugee Council accused ministers of "choosing control over compassion" by insisting on visa requirements which EU countries have dropped.

Chief executive Enver Solomon said Britons who are prepared to open up their homes have been left feeling "angry and frustrated that their gesture of support has been lost into a web of bureaucracy and chaos".

He added: "It's clear that the visa schemes which were supposedly designed to ensure the safety of Ukrainians fleeing war and bloodshed are unfit for purpose."

Liberal Democrat leader Sir Ed Davey has called for the home secretary to resign over her "failure" to help those fleeing was effectively enough.

"We want to offer Ukrainians a home, but Priti Patel has slammed the door in their face," Sir Ed tweeted. "An apology isn't enough. She must resign."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** April 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ireland to take 500 Ukrainian refugees from Moldova*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650S-M6T1-DY4H-K269-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 15, 2022 Tuesday 4:59 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:3

**Length:** 1430 words

**Byline:** Jonathan McCambridge

**Highlight:** The Irish premier said 6,646 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have now come into Ireland.

**Body**

[*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) will take 500 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who are currently in [*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova) , the country's premier has confirmed.

Micheal Martin, who is in Washington for the St Patrick's Day celebrations, said: "We have just had a cabinet meeting by videolink, mainly on the Ukrainian war and the crisis that is unfolding, the humanitarian crisis.

"We confirmed the support scheme that was agreed earlier in the week in respect of the support for truckers and the haulage industry in light of the exceptional pressures that they are under.

"The [*Cabinet*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cabinet) also decided to accept 500 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have fled into Moldova, given the enormous pressure Moldova is under at the moment.

"We will be taking those refugees in towards the end of this week and that is in addition to those that have come in already."

Hosting a meeting of the Cabinet from Washington DC this morning as Government discusses our latest response to the situation in [*#Ukraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Ukraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/tqAI74VY7n*](https://t.co/tqAI74VY7n) - Michel Martin (@MichealMartinTD) [*March 15, 2022*](https://twitter.com/MichealMartinTD/status/1503726934903214084?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Mr Martin, who will meet US president [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) this week as part of the traditional St Patrick's Day ceremony at the White House, said that about 6,646 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have now come into Ireland.He also said the EU had agreed further sanctions against Russia.He said: "Thousands of units of accommodation have been secured by the Department of Children and they are continuing to secure additional accommodation."They are looking beyond that at the pledges which have been received and they will commence with those properties that are empty with a view to making sure that we can accommodate those who will continue to come into the country."He added: "There is a range of European Union meetings happening over coming days.At today's [*#Eurogroup*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Eurogroup?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) we took stock of the economic impact of the war in Ukraine, agreed a statement on budgetary coordination for 2022 and 2023 and discussed further progress on [*#BankingUnion*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/BankingUnion?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) My remarks at the press conference: [*https://t.co/eAeYhX9FOt*](https://t.co/eAeYhX9FOt) [*pic.twitter.com/1T38AKXIip*](https://t.co/1T38AKXIip) - Paschal Donohoe (@Paschald) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/Paschald/status/1503468619463892995?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) "The European Union have announced further sanctions this morning particularly in terms of iron and steel, listing further individuals, getting rid of the most favoured nation status that Russia enjoyed at the WTO, so the benefits derived from the WTO would be denied Russia, and a number of other measures as well and further sanctions would be kept under constant review."We again call on Russia to end the war, it is an appalling tragedy unfolding, it is an appalling immoral attack on the people of Ukraine which has shocked the world in terms of its human toll, and it is absolutely vital that Russia would cease all hostilities."Earlier, the Irish Minister for Finance said the sanctions were having an impact on Russia."The measures that have been brought in are, in effect, undermining or may indeed stop the ability of the Russian economy to fund this murderous war," Paschal Donohoe said."And to see what has happened with the value of the rouble, that their stock markets are no longer functioning and that the central bank is now not able to access foreign exchange reserves and needs to convert the rouble, it is a sign that what is in place at the moment has already had a huge effect, combined with the decisions that private sector companies all over the world are now making.Kyiv has been attacked yesterday morning. Residences of hundreds of citizens were destroyed by the hostile missiles. [*#StopPutin*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StopPutin?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/t5IlF5sHFL*](https://t.co/t5IlF5sHFL) - Larysa Gerasko (@GeraskoLarysa) [*March 15, 2022*](https://twitter.com/GeraskoLarysa/status/1503534895393562625?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Mr Donohoe also said that the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) is not considering any further measures to mitigate against the rising cost of living and energy costs and warned that the Government is not able to insulate the economy and businesses from higher costs."We will keep all of this under very active review. At the moment, and up to the budget which I will do in October, I and the Government have no further plans to add to what we have just done," he added."The reason for that is we're still about to implement the measures that we have just agreed to."So the excise reduction last week between nine and 13 euros per tank of diesel and petrol, that has been implemented."For many that has been offset by the increase in the price of fuel that has happened since then.Today, Ireland, with over 50 fellow Member States & the EU, launched a joint statement condemning [*#Russia*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Russia?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) 's aggression against [*#Ukraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Ukraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). We reaffirm our full support for the Ukrainian people, in particular women & girls affected![*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#CSW66*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/CSW66?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/Y1xk5ax2cE*](https://t.co/Y1xk5ax2cE) - Ireland at UN (@irishmissionun) [*March 15, 2022*](https://twitter.com/irishmissionun/status/1503734699700670465?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

"But the 125 euro payments that have been made to those who need additional support with the cost of fuel has just now been made to over 300,000 homes.

"The 200 euro credit that will appear in your energy bill is yet to be implemented, but will be implemented soon.

"The measures that we have put in place we believe are a strong response back to the difficulty that many are facing, but I want to underline that given the challenge that is under way, we will not be able to insulate either economy, businesses or even ourselves from this entire cost."

Meanwhile Ukrainian ambassador to Ireland Larysa Gerasko said the Ukrainians who have arrived in Ireland are grateful for the "warm welcome".

"I met many of our Ukrainians, some of them came to the consulate," she added.

"Our people, of course, they are frustrated, many of them came from the cities that are under shelling and firing.

"They got accommodation, PPS number, first aid. They have, of course, a lot of question on how to get education, how to register their kid to go school or kindergarten, how would you arrange to see a GP.

"It's everyday things but it's very difficult for them, especially (for those) who haven't any relatives or friends here to understand how this system in foreign countries work.

Many Ukrainians and even my friends, they don't know that they don't need a visa to get to Ireland

Larysa Gerasko, Ukrainian ambassador to Ireland

"Many of them don't speak English. So it's also a problem but many people from the Ukrainian community here help our newcomers with the translation and many, many other things."

She said that while it is difficult to predict the number of refugees who will seek help in Ireland, she estimates it to be about 80,000 people.

She said that Ukrainians have been made aware that Ireland has waived its visa requirements.

"But many Ukrainians and even my friends, they don't know that they don't need a visa to get to Ireland," Ms Gerasko added.

"So we will make an information campaign again in Ukrainian mass media. Of course I'm sure that many thousands will arrive."

Mairead McGuinness, the Irish European Commissioner, said on Tuesday that sanctions were working against Russia.

She said: "I think perhaps we have overlooked their impact, because the Russian economy is in freefall.

"It is not because we want to hurt Russian citizens, it is because we want to hurt the war machine. And we are doing that and it is very effective."

If there is a further escalation, what do we do? And the truth of all this is, while we hope there won't be, we have to remain flexible and agile

Mairead McGuinness, Irish European Commissioner

Ms McGuinness refused to be drawn on what actions the EU might take if a Russian strike was to hit the territory of a member state.

The potential for the conflict in Ukraine to trigger a wider clash was underlined over the weekend with a strike close to the border with Poland.

"If there is a further escalation, what do we do? And the truth of all this is, while we hope there won't be, we have to remain flexible and agile," she said.

"We don't have a European army. We don't have that capacity. And I don't think we want to fight a war. We want to stop a war at all possible costs."

She told RTE radio: "We hope that some of the peace talks which are happening will yield results. Because frankly, this scenario that we are facing as citizens of Europe is quite concerning."

In an interview with RTE News on Tuesday , the Taoiseach echoed her.

He said world leaders were doing everything possible to defend Ukraine, while also trying to avoid a dangerous escalation with a nuclear power.

Mr Martin said the EU, the US and other western powers were acting "within the limits of being anxious not to provoke a third world war".

"So there are real limits to the degree of intervention the US and others can undertake here."

"But up to those limits, everything possible is being done," Mr Martin said.

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Student accommodation to be opened for Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6521-XVF1-DY4H-K29D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 21, 2022 Monday 2:51 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 772 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** Irish colleges and universities will make student beds available to refugees when they fall vacant at the end of the term.

**Body**

Student accommodation will be made available for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving in Ireland, Simon Harris has said.

The Higher Education Minister said on Monday that [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) colleges and universities will make student beds available to refugees when they fall vacant at the end of the term.

Mr Harris, speaking alongside Finance Minister Paschal Donohoe at the Technological University Dublin, said that 1,000 student beds have already been offered.

"We have been working with our colleges and we're continuing to work with them to make sure that student accommodation, which will be vacant when colleges are closed, can be made available in the short-term for Ukrainian students," he said, as he helped turn the sod at a new academic hub and library at the Grangegorman campus.

"That might help in terms of some of the sequencing, to allow time for other options to be put in place in terms of accommodation.

"More than 1,000 student beds have already been offered up by colleges and universities right across our country."

Mr Harris also confirmed he and his family have registered to provide a room for any Ukrainians who need it.

Nearly 10,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have already arrived in Ireland, which has waived all visa requirements for those fleeing the Russian invasion.

The [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) has already confirmed that students coming from Ukraine will be able to continue their studies in Ireland.

Mr Harris said: "The policy objective here is to make sure in the middle of the biggest humanitarian crisis we've ever lived through that there aren't vacant beds when college is done.

"I really want to thank our universities for the leadership they've shown."

Asked whether private student accommodation companies - which provide hundreds of beds in Dublin alone - will make rooms available, Mr Harris said that the Government was working with local authorities to "identify in every town and every county, what sort of accommodation may be available".

"I'm sure private student accommodation will come into the mix in that regard," he said.

Mr Donohoe told reporters that he did not want to see financial constraints on how many refugees from Ukraine the country could take.

"Overall, there are always constraints that the Government faces in relation to national finances, in relation to how much we can borrow.

"But we are going to do all we can to make sure that is not the constraints that guides how our country responds back to this huge humanitarian need.

"We're going to mobilise all the resources that are available to us to do it.

"But it does mean there's a need for Government then to be open and honest about the fact that we will not be able to meet every other need that we want to respond back to because the need to respond back to humanitarian needs that we are going to face will be so important."

[*Simon Coveney*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/simon-coveney) , speaking from a meeting of EU foreign ministers in [*Brussels*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brussels) , said Ireland would likely be doubling its contribution to Ukraine as part of the European Peace Facility - a fund set up to send military aid to the war-torn country.

The Foreign Affairs Minister said he expected EU member states to reach an agreement in the coming days on a doubling of that fund from half a billion euro to one billion euro, bringing the Republic of Ireland's total contribution to 22 million euro.

The country, while militarily neutral, has committed itself to providing non-lethal aid to Ukrainian forces battling the Russian invasion.

The minister said he believed there was an "appetite for increased sanctions" in the EU, but acknowledged that difficult discussions remained about possible sanctions on Russian oil and gas imports.

"I certainly accept that money coming from the EU, in the energy sector, is funding Russia right now. You don't need to convince me that we need to add significantly to the four packages of sanctions already agreed," he said.

Mr Coveney told RTE radio that some options currently being discussed "impact significantly on EU member states and so we have to be sure we can keep unity in this discussion".

The [*European Council*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/european-council) is set for a further crunch meeting at the end of the week but it remains unclear if Taoiseach Micheal Martin will make it.

The Irish premier remains in isolation in Washington after testing positive for Covid during his trip to the US capital to mark St Patrick's Day.

"We will have to wait and see whether he is able to attend the European Council in person or not," Mr Coveney said.

Earlier, Mr Donohoe said: "He'll only attend if his health allows it and if the rules governing attendance at that meeting, from a health point of view, allow him to be there. So I hope it will happen."

**Load-Date:** March 21, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Home Office is 'absolutely working on' bringing Ukrainian refugees to UK*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WR-1CG1-JBNF-W2C0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 1, 2022 Tuesday 5:06 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 527 words

**Byline:** Alana Calvert

**Highlight:** The Home Secretary said there will be 'further changes' in coming days after she came under intense criticism from MPs and refugee charities.

**Body**

[*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) has said the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) is "absolutely working on" the possibility of helping ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** come to the UK.

Hours earlier the [*Home Secretary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-secretary) ruled out a visa waiver for those fleeing the conflict with Russia over security concerns.

Speaking with ITV's [*Peston*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/peston) on Monday night, she reiterated statements made earlier in the day about the priority of safeguarding "our public and our people" from "Putin's Russia".

She added that "further changes" would be announced in the "next few days" to help the people of Ukraine, but the current situation was "very fluid and dynamic".

Ms Patel went on: "This is absolutely a phased approach around humanitarian support for the people of Ukraine. So this isn't just about what we do on visas and our policy, this is much wider than that.

"So over the last weeks we've been focused on getting British nationals out of Ukraine, we've changed all sorts of things in terms of visas and prioritisation of cases. That's the first aspect to this.

"Our policies are evolving - this is changing, this is a very fluid and dynamic situation. And in fact there will be further changes and announcements that we'll be making in the next few days as well."

The Home Secretary, who has come under intense political pressure from [*MPs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mps) across the Commons to do more to allow ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to reach the UK, insisted she was taking action to open safe routes.

Ms Patel also faced criticism from refugee charities for falling short of the package of measures put forward by all 27 EU member countries.

According to UN refugee chief Filippo Grandi 520,000 refugees from Ukraine have so far fled to neighbouring countries and the number keeps rising.

The UN is planning for up to four million refugees in the coming weeks if the conflict doesn't end, he said.

"We know that we are not even scratching the surface to meet the needs of Ukrainians," he told an emergency Security Council meeting.

Earlier on Monday Ms Patel told MPs in the Commons she was following the "strongest security advice" as she rejected the call to scrap the need for visas.

"Over the weekend I have seen members of this House calling for full visa waivers for all Ukrainians," Ms Patel said.

"Security and biometric checks are a fundamental part of our visa approval process worldwide and will continue, as they did for the evacuation of people from Afghanistan.

"That is vital to keep British citizens safe and to ensure that we are helping those in genuine need, particularly as Russian troops are now infiltrating Ukraine and merging into Ukrainian forces.

"Intelligence reports also state the presence of extremist groups and organisations who threaten the region but also our domestic homeland.

"We know all too well what Putin's Russia is willing to do, even on our soil, as we saw through the Salisbury attack."

The Home Secretary said the first phase of the "bespoke humanitarian route" being created for Ukrainians to enter the UK would allow around 100,000 people to come to "seek sanctuary".

The Government has already announced measures allowing people who are settled in the UK to be able to bring their Ukrainian immediate family members to join them.

**Load-Date:** March 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Treasury urged to double fees for Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:665Y-NX81-JCS0-D2MJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

August 18, 2022 Thursday

Second Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 20

**Length:** 590 words

**Byline:** ADAM FORREST

**Body**

The government has been urged to consider proposals to double the £350 payment to British families hosting Ukrainians, amid growing fears that thousands of refugees could be left homeless.

It comes as more than a thousand hosts of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have signed an open letter urging ministers to make it easier for them to move on into permanent homes.

Around 79,000 refugees came to Britain under the Homes ForUkrainesponsorship scheme, after hosts agreed to provide accommodation for at least six months - but some placements are approaching their end.

Almost one in four hosts were planning to end the hosting arrangement at the end of six months, according to recent ONS figures - with many people citing pressure from the cost of living crisis.

The letter from the hosts - organised Sanctuary Foundation - echoed calls from the Local Government Association (LGA) to increase the £350 a month "thank you" payment, which would help hosts provide accommodation for longer than six months.

A source close to the scheme told PoliticsHome that the Treasury has been presented with a proposal to increase the payment to £700 for all hosts willing to extend their welcome beyond the six months to stop refugees from being left homeless.

The source told the website that they hoped an increase could be signed-off in the coming weeks, despite the change of prime minister on 5 September.

The proposal is said to have been put forward "not on moral grounds, purely on financial grounds", since the doubling of payments would be less expensive than housing refugees declared homeless.

The government is continuing to monitor and review the support provided under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, it is understood.

Already, more than 1,300 Ukrainian single households and families have been assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness, as of 2 July.

Some hosting arrangements have broken down, and some of the housing provided to refugees proved to be unsuitable. Councils fear that homelessness could rise as more of the initial six-month placements with some hosts end.

The Sanctuary Foundation, which organised the letter from around 1,200 hosts, said finding appropriate and affordable long-term accommodation "is one of the greatest challenges" to the scheme.

The government has been warned that "there is currently no simple way for them to find their own homes" amid pressures on social housing and the private rented sector.

The hosts' letter reads: "As hosts who care deeply about the future of the Ukrainians in our homes, we ask the government to help us ensure they are able to take the next steps towards integration in our communities.

"There is currently no simple way for them to find their own homes, with social housing and the private rental sector already stretched and difficult to access."

The group called for the government to take a series of practical steps to help refugees find permanent accommodation, including for Universal Credit housing allowance to be topped up for 12 months to enable refugees to remain in their local area.

They are calling for local authorities to be guarantors for those trying to rent a home, and for the government to outline a clear re-matching process and to recruit more hosts.

The letter adds: "Knowing that our guests can move on swiftly and safely when they and we are ready to do so will make a big difference, and will reduce stress for those who have already faced so much trauma fleeing a war, as well as for those of us hosting them."

The Independent has approached the Treasury for comment.

**Load-Date:** August 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Waive visa requirements for Ukrainian refugees, British Red Cross chief says*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6562-J581-DY4H-K4S3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 9, 2022 Saturday 10:00 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 588 words

**Byline:** Sophie Wingate

**Highlight:** Mike Adamson said only a 'small trickle' of Ukrainian families had arrived in the UK and urged the Government to make the process 'much easier'.

**Body**

The head of the [*British Red Cross*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british-red-cross) has criticised the "long, complex" application process for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** seeking sanctuary in the UK and has called for the removal of visa requirements.

[*Mike Adamson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mike-adamson) , the charity's chief executive, said only a "small trickle" of refugees are reaching the UK and that it should be made "much easier to come here".

"It will remain a slow process with the current visa arrangements in place and it's only if we remove those that we'll actually start to see a steady flow," he told [*BBC*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bbc) Breakfast.

BBC breakfast i/view this am, about kindness of people welcoming Ukrainians but frustration at visa requirements that slow arrivals. We need to waive visas, use biometric passports & invest in welcome/integration hubs -this emergency demands scale here in UK [*@BritishRedCross*](https://twitter.com/BritishRedCross?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/azG8gPqu2H*](https://t.co/azG8gPqu2H) - Mike Adamson (@MichaelAdamson5) [*April 9, 2022*](https://twitter.com/MichaelAdamson5/status/1512710282593853442?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

"The whole of [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) and many other countries have waived their visa requirements.

"Most Ukrainians have biometric passports so we can do checks on them when they get here, we can find out who they are.

"And if we set up really good welcome centres and hubs, as the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) has actually promised, then we can look after them there, go through the matching processes, check out all the safety and security requirements.

"But the key thing is we get far more people here and then Britain would be playing its part at scale alongside our partners across Europe and of course showing solidarity and practical support to the people of Ukraine in this terrible situation."

A village in Oxfordshire that has prepared homes for 45 refugees fleeing the Russian invasion of Ukraine has only seen one Ukrainian family arrive so far.

Our village who are waiting already with lots of support can't get the refugees because the visas don't come through

Fundraiser Polly Vacher

Polly Vacher, 78, who is co-ordinating the project, said would-be hosts in the village of North Moreton have been ready to welcome refugees for more than three weeks.

"The houses have been ready and support network is there," she told BBC Breakfast.

"Our village who are waiting already with lots of support can't get the refugees because the visas don't come through and if you think about it, these people, they've been through the most terrible situation."

Ms Vacher also criticised the "very lengthy process" of filling in visa application forms, saying it took lawyers two hours to complete for one family.

"These lawyers have put in 150 applications, and only 10% have actually received their visas," she added.

"And after they put in the applications they got a message from the Home Office to say they'd lost some of the attachments, which are things like passports and that sort of thing, and therefore they had to resubmit the application, which meant they went to the bottom of the list."

The Home Secretary on Friday apologised "with frustration" after coming under fire over "delays" in the time it is taking for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to arrive in the UK.

But Priti Patel denied visa requirements and checks are slowing the process and causing delays, insisting the UK will "absolutely see changes in numbers" as work continues.

Around 12,000 people had arrived in the UK under Ukraine visa schemes as of Tuesday, according to Home Office figures.

Some 10,800 people had arrived under the Ukraine family scheme but only 1,200 had made it to the UK as part of the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme, provisional data published on the department's website shows.

**Load-Date:** April 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Kate Middleton’s parents plan to welcome Ukrainian refugees in Berkshire home, report says*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65WY-26D1-DY4H-K19S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 11, 2022 Monday 5:03 PM GMT

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**Section:** ROYAL FAMILY,LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 457 words

**Byline:** Meredith Clark

**Highlight:** The Duchess’ parents plan on creating an annexe at their £4.7 manor house, a source has revealed

**Body**

The Duchess of Cambridge’s parents are making arrangements to welcome ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) into their Berkshire home, according to a report from [*The Mail on Sunday*](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10998531/Kate-Middletons-parents-planning-welcome-Ukrainian-refugees-5m-manor-Berkshire.html).

Michael, 73, and Carole Middleton, 67, are reportedly planning to create an annexe at their £4.7 manor house in Bucklebury, Berkshire to house the refugees.

“Bucklebury has housed a good number of refugees and Carole has been getting advice from villagers and seeking information about how the process has worked for others in the area,” a source told Mail on Sunday.

One of the plans includes converting a living room at the seven-bedroom Bucklebury Manor into a separate accommodation for the family. However, there are still security concerns given the regular visits to the property by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and their three children – George, eight; Charlotte, seven; and Louis, four.

“Carole talked about wanting refugees to feel they have their own space in her home and has been talking about the logistics of how it all works,” the source added. “There have been a few conversations about this, back and forth.”

The Middletons join a number of high-profile figures who have already begun housing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, including television personality and fellow Berkshire resident Chris Tarrant. The former Who Wants To Be A Millionaire host described the family – a Ukrainian woman, her elderly mother and ten-month-old baby – as “so sweet” during an appearance on [*The Chris Moyles Show on Radio X*](https://www.radiox.co.uk/radio/shows-presenters/chris-moyles/chris-tarrant-opens-up-taking-ukrainian-family-home/) in May.

The source went on to add that Mrs Middleton “suggested she and some of those who are housing refugees should meet up” because she wants to find a way to house refugees herself.

The report comes as the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge continue to show support for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) amid Russia’s invasion of the country, which was launched in February. According to the [*United Nations*](https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine#_ga=2.247621892.2029399102.1657552323-1656948162.1657552296) , an estimated 5.6m refugees from Ukraine have been recorded across Europe since the attack.

In February, Prince William and Kate Middleton made a [*rare political statement*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/russia-ukraine-support-prince-william-kate-middleton-b2023956.html) when the couple posted a message of solidarity with Ukranians to social media.

“In October 2020 we had the privilege to meet President Zelenskyy and the First Lady to learn of their hope and optimism for Ukraine’s future,” the royal couple said. “Today we stand with the President and all of Ukraine’s people as they bravely fight for that future.”

They signed off with an emoji of the Ukranian flag and “W & C”.

The mom of three has also subtly paid tribute to Ukraine through her jewelry and outfit choices. During the Commonwealth Day Service at Westminster Abbey last March, the duchess sported a [*necklace*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/kate-middleton-ukraine-commonwealth-day-jewellery-b2035699.html) she had previously worn while meeting President Zelensky and his wife Olena at Buckingham Palace in 2020.

**Load-Date:** July 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Payment to Irish households for Ukrainian refugees 'to be made in coming weeks'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:659Y-1R11-JBNF-W226-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 27, 2022 Wednesday 4:05 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 242 words

**Byline:** Cate McCurry

**Highlight:** Department of Social Protection officials are assessing the out-workings of the plan.

**Body**

A plan to offer financial support to [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) householders taking in ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** could be in operation in the coming weeks.

The [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) is looking at offering 400 euro (£336) payments to householders who provide accommodation.

Department of Social Protection officials are assessing the out-workings of the plan.

Minister for Social Protection Heather Humphreys said on Wednesday that there are almost 27,000 Ukrainians who have been issued with PPS numbers.

About 14,000 Ukrainians in [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) are of working age.

Asked about the plan to pay households 400 euro each month to host refugees, she said: "This is something that government is considering and myself and (Children's Minister) Roderic O'Gorman and (Public Expenditure) Minister Michael McGrath, and our officials are working up some options there.

"We hope to bring a memo to government very shortly. We now have a [*Cabinet*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cabinet) sub-committee set up specifically to deal with the Ukrainian crisis and we'll be feeding everything in through that.

"I think it'll be shortly, it will very soon."

We are looking at it but to be honest, keep it simple, that's the best way to administer any assistance.

Heather Humphreys

She said her officials are working through the details of the proposed policy.

"There are a number of issues we need to be clear on before we announce it," Ms Humphreys added.

"We are looking at it but to be honest, keep it simple, that's the best way to administer any assistance."

**Load-Date:** April 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees find route to US goes through Mexico*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:655K-SHC1-DY4H-K0FY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 7, 2022 Thursday 5:03 AM GMT

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**Length:** 981 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Hundreds of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving daily have a message for family and friends in Europe: the quickest route to settling in the United States is booking a flight to Mexico

**Body**

Hundreds of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving daily have a message for family and friends in Europe: the fastest route to settle in the United States is booking a flight to Mexico.

A loose volunteer coalition, largely from Slavic churches in the western United States, is guiding hundreds of refugees daily from the airport in the Mexican border city of [*Tijuana*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tijuana) to hotels, churches and shelters, where they wait two to four days for U.S officials to admit them on humanitarian parole. In less than two weeks, volunteers worked with U.S. and Mexican officials to build a remarkably efficient and expanding network to provide food, security, transportation, and shelter.

The volunteers, who wear blue and yellow badges to represent the Ukrainian flag but have no group name or leader, started a waiting list on notepads and later switched to a mobile app normally used to track church attendance. Ukrainians are told to report to a U.S. border crossing as their numbers approach, a system that organizers liken to waiting for a restaurant table.

"We feel so lucky, so blessed," said Tatiana Bondarenko, who traveled through Moldova, Romania, Austria and Mexico before arriving Tuesday in [*San Diego*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/san-diego) with her husband and children, ages 8, 12, and 15. Her final destination was Sacramento, California, to live with her mother, who she hadn't seen in 15 years.

Another Ukrainian family posed nearby for photos under a U.S. Customs and Border Protection sign at San Diego's San Ysidro port of entry, the busiest crossing between the U.S. and Mexico. Volunteers under a blue canopy offered snacks while refugees waited for family to pick them up or for buses to take them to a nearby church.

At the Tijuana airport, weary travelers who enter Mexico as tourists in Mexico City or Cancun are directed to a makeshift lounge in the terminal with a sign in black marker that reads, "Only for ***Ukrainian*** ***Refugees***." It is the only place to register to enter the U.S.

About 200 to 300 Ukrainians were being admitted daily at the San Ysidro crossing this week, with hundreds more arriving in Tijuana, according to volunteers who manage the waiting list. There were 973 families or single adults waiting on Tuesday.

U.S officials told volunteers they aim to admit about 550 Ukrainians daily as processing moves to a nearby crossing that is temporarily closed to the public. CBP didn't provide numbers in response to questions about operations and plans, saying only that it has expanded facilities in San Diego to deal with humanitarian cases.

"We realized we had a problem that the government wasn't going to solve, so we solved it," said Phil Metzger, pastor of Calvary Church in the San Diego suburb of Chula Vista, where about 75 members host Ukrainian families and another 100 refugees sleep on air mattresses and pews.

Metzger, whose pastoral work has taken him to Ukraine and Hungary, calls the operation "duct tape and glue" but refugees prefer it to overwhelmed [*European*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) countries, where millions of Ukrainians have settled.

The Biden administration has said it will accept up to 100,000 Ukrainians but Mexico is the only route producing big numbers. Appointments at U.S. consulates in Europe are scarce, and refugee resettlement takes time.

The administration set a refugee resettlement cap of 125,000 in the 12-month period that ends Sept. 30 but accepted only 8,758 by March 31, including 704 Ukrainians. In the previous year, it capped refugee resettlement at 62,500 but took only 11,411, including 803 Ukrainians.

The administration paroled more than 76,000 Afghans through U.S. airports in response to the departure of American troops last year, but nothing similar is afoot for Ukrainians.

Oskana Dugnyk, 36, hesitated to leave her home in Bucha but acquiesced to her husband's wishes before Russian troops invaded the town and left behind streets strewn with corpses. The couple worried about violence in Mexico with three young children but the robust presence of volunteers in Tijuana reassured them and a friend in Ohio agreed to host them.

"So far, so good," Dugnyk said a day after arriving at a Tijuana gymnasium that the city government opened for about 400 Ukrainians to sleep on a basketball court. "We have food. We have a place to stay. We hope everything will be fine."

Alerted by text message or social media, Ukrainians are summoned to a grassy hill and bus shelter near the border crossing hours before their numbers are called. The city government opened the bus shelter to protect Ukrainians from torrential rain.

Angelina Mykyta, a college student in Kyiv, acknowledged nerves as her number neared. She fled to Warsaw after the invasion but decided to take a chance on the United States because she wanted to settle with a pastor she knows in Kalispell, Montana.

"I think we'll be OK," she said while waiting to be escorted from the camp of hundreds of Ukrainians to their final stop in Mexico - a small area with a few dozen folding chairs within earshot of U.S. officials. Some refuse to drink at the final stop, fearing they will have to go to the bathroom and miss their turn.

Lulls end when CBP officers approach: "We need a family." "Give me three more." "Singles, we need singles." A volunteer ensures orderly movement.

The arrival of Ukrainians comes as the Biden administration prepares for much larger numbers when pandemic-related asylum limits for all nationalities end May 23. Since March 2020, the U.S. has used Title 42 authority, named for a 1944 public health law, to suspend rights to seek asylum under U.S. law and international treaty.

Metzger, the Chula Vista pastor, said his church cannot long continue its 24-hour-a-day pace helping refugees, and suspects U.S. authorities will not adopt what volunteers have done.

"If you make something go smooth, then everybody's going to come," he said. "We're making it so easy. Eventually I'm sure they'll say, 'No, we're done.'"

**Load-Date:** April 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees to travel for free on UK trains*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651D-VN51-DY4H-K1ST-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 18, 2022 Friday 7:02 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 428 words

**Byline:** Jon Stone

**Highlight:** Britain follows other European rail operators who have provided free travel since invasion

**Body**

Britain has joined other European countries in offering free onward travel for ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) on its rail network.

A statement issued by the rail industry on Friday said the concession would allow Ukrainians to get "to a safe place".

Under the scheme people will have to show a Ukrainian passport and boarding pass or ticket, and be given 48 hour to travel to their destination from their arrival in Britain.

It comes two weeks after Eurostar, the high-speed cross-channel operator, made a similar concession for people coming to the UK, provided they could produce a visa.

The German, French, Dutch, Polish, and Czech state rail operators, as well as high-speed service Thalys, are among national railways to have for weeks provided free travel for Ukrainian nationals crossing Europe.

"To help Ukrainian nationals travelling to the UK, we are offering free onward travel on National Rail services to get you to a safe place," a statement posted on the National Rail Enquiries website said.â¯

"To make use of this scheme, you will need to show your Ukrainian passport and a boarding pass or ticket showing your arrival into the UK.

"The offer is valid across all train operators in England, Scotland and Wales, and you will have 48 hours from arrival in the UK to complete your journey.

"You will be able to use London Underground/DLR services if your journey requires you to travel between London national rail stations."

The Department for Transport said the scheme would begin on Sunday 20 March.

Around three million people have fled [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) since the Russian invasion, but as of 15 March just 5,500 visas have been issued by British authorities.

EU countries are meanwhile allowing Ukrainians entry without a visa for up to three years. Poland, which borders Ukraine, has taken 1.1 million people, and the UK's neighbour Ireland is already hosting nearly 7,000.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/null) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees being sent to scenic beauty spots, says Clare TD*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65G6-KT21-DY4H-K450-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 17, 2022 Tuesday 5:18 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 821 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** The Irish Government has approved plans for a 400 euro monthly payment for households accommodating refugees from Ukraine.

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** cannot be "funnelled through [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) beauty spots", an Oireachtas committee has heard.

It comes as the Irish [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) approved plans for a 400 euro monthly payment for households accommodating refugees from Ukraine.

Integration Minister Roderic O'Gorman and his officials faced questions from an Oireachtas committee over the Government response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis.

Fianna Fail TD Cathal Crowe, who represents Clare, made a highly-charged intervention to warn that his county was struggling to provide all the necessary services to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Mr Crowe, alongside [*Social Democrats*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/social-democrats) TD Holly Cairns, asked Mr O'Gorman why Ukrainians had not, unlike thousands of other refugees arriving into Ireland, been forced into the widely-criticised direct provision system.

Mr Crowe said that 2% of the population in the county is now Ukrainian.

If you and I were fleeing a war situation in Ireland, and if we had to go to Ukraine, I don't think I'd want to be put up in a beauty spot on a green hillside or in a place where beautiful waves crash up against the shore

Fianna Fail TD Cathal Crowe

"If you and I were fleeing a war situation in Ireland, and if we had to go to Ukraine, I don't think I'd want to be put up in a beauty spot on a green hillside or in a place where beautiful waves crash up against the shore.

"I would want to be put in a place that ticks more than the roof over my head box, a place that could meet my family's educational, transport, health needs.

"That isn't the strategy at the moment.

"They are being sent to scenic beauty spots.

"Which is fine in the month of May 2022, but will be a different story from the autumn?

"This cannot all be funnelled through Ireland's beauty spots and seasonal hotels.

"No-one is looking at the ancillary services that these people require, the pastoral care, the support.

"It won't haunt us now but it will haunt us in the months ahead. We need a more holistic, nationwide response."

Mr O'Gorman, who said in his opening statement to the committee that parts of the Government response had been "imperfect", said that the EU temporary protection directive was the reason for the different treatment received by Ukrainians compared with other refugees.

Our responses had to be an emergency one

Integration Minister Roderic O'Gorman

"That may be a convincing or an unconvincing reason, but that is the reason.

"There is a very substantial number of Ukrainians in Clare.

"I understand its impact on very small towns and villages," he told Mr Crowe, as he stressed that refugees were being housed across the country.

"We are in a European war right now. This is not normality in any context.

"One deputy said that we did not expect to be dealing with this last year.

"We didn't expect this on February 14 this year.

"Our responses had to be an emergency one."

Mr O'Gorman also spoke at length about the arrangements for the new opt-in payment, which was approved by the [*Cabinet*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cabinet) on Tuesday and will require new legislation.

He said it might be July until people receive the payment, which will be paid as long as a Ukrainian family or individual is staying in an Irish household for at least six months.

He said it was a "flat fee" and did not change even if someone was hosting more than one Ukrainian person.

"I know there are a very significant number of people who probably don't want to take this, who feel they're doing this out of solidarity," Mr O'Gorman said.

"We also felt it was important to recognise that, in terms of cost-of-living pressure, there are definitely additional costs of someone living in your house and we wanted to provide this recognition.

"It's not taxable, the payment, and it doesn't interfere with the allocation of any social welfare benefits."

Appearing later on Tuesday afternoon, representatives from the Irish Red Cross said that 33 million euro had been raised in donations in response to the war in Ukraine.

It comes as the organisation also received over 25,500 offers of accommodation.

Liam O'Dwyer, secretary general of the Irish Red Cross, said that three million euro would be used in Ireland to support ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

But he also warned that refugees being moved from place to place was an "issue".

"I know that hotels are going to be used, shortly, for other purposes, and I know refugees are being moved from one place to the next.

"All of that is difficult.

"And I think lessons learned from that need to be learned quickly, because the refugees need to be communicated with.

"The biggest issue for them is what they call progression.

"They have children.

"Some have jobs and they want to know where they're going to be, which is understandable.

"And when they're being moved like that, that is an issue."

The organisation was also asked about figures showing 22% of pledges had been withdrawn.

Mr O'Dwyer said it was "normal" and that in many cases people realise that an initial offer of accommodation may not be practical.

**Load-Date:** May 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Eurostar to let Ukrainian refugees travel to Britain for free on its trains*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X0-B7T1-DY4H-K0TK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 2, 2022 Wednesday 1:03 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 460 words

**Byline:** Jon Stone

**Highlight:** Channel tunnel high-speed rail operator joins other services around Europe in extending free travel

**Body**

[*Eurostar*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/eurostar) is to let ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing to the UK travel on its trains for free, the company has announced.

The cross-channel high-speed rail operator joins other carriers around Europe in extending free travel to Ukraine nationals following the invasion of their country.

The company said people with a valid visa to enter the UK and a Ukrainian passport should speak to Eurostar staff in Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam or Lille to be issued with a free ticket.

"To help Ukrainian nationals travelling to the UK, we can offer a free Eurostar ticket from any Eurostar station to London St. Pancras International," the company said in a statement issued on Wednesday.

The German, French, Dutch, Polish, and Czech state rail operators, as well as high-speed service Thalys, are among national railways to have already announced free travel for Ukrainian nationals.

Eurostar's announcement means people with no resources will now also be able to reach the UK by train if they can secure a visa.

Most European Union member states are operating an open door policy and have said they will give Ukrainians refuge without the need to apply for asylum.

The Russian invasion is expected to displace millions of people, with hundreds of thousands of people already making their way to join family or seek safety in other countries.

But the UK government has not followed suit and is operating a much harsher policy, with only a limited relaxation of visa conditions for those with family member in already in Britain. The new conditions are so limited do not even cover adult children, their parents, brothers or sisters.

Opposition party Labour says the UK's visa system should be simplified and has suggested the exemption should cover more relatives, though they have stopped short of calling for an open door along the lines of the EU.

But Ukrainians who can obtain a visa will now be able to travel across the English Channel for free. In its statement, Eurostar said: "It is important to arrive with the necessary visa documents, as these will be checked by the UK Border Force during the check-in process.

"The UK government is regularly reviewing the criteria for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to enter the UK, so we would strongly recommend contacting the British Embassy or checking the UK government website for the latest information." The company also clarified that it could not accept pets on trains at this time.

Eurostar operates high-speed rail services between London and the continent through the Channel Tunnel.

The Independent last week launched its [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) campaign, calling on the government to set up a resettlement scheme to grant sanctuary in the UK to Ukrainians fleeing the bloody conflict. Polls suggest a strong backing for the move.

**Load-Date:** March 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UK should 'cut red tape' to help fleeing Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y8-N6C1-JBNF-W1VX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 4:33 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 657 words

**Byline:** Bronwen Weatherby

**Highlight:** Mark Drakeford has called on the UK Government to simplify the immigration process to enter the UK.

**Body**

The [*UK Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk-government) needs to "cut the red tape" to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing Russian aggression, The Welsh [*First Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/first-minister) has said.

[*Mark Drakeford*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mark-drakeford) on Tuesday called on [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) and his [*Cabinet*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cabinet) to "revisit its immigration policies" in order to simplify the process which allows those escaping conflict to enter the country.

It comes amid criticism of the British Government over its slow response to the refugee crisis, with the Home Office revealing on Monday it had only granted 300 visa applications out of 17,700 which had been started - with 8,900 submitted.

Wales is ready to support refugees from Ukraine but more needs to be done to ensure safe and easy travel routes are available.The UK Government needs to revisit its immigration policies to cut the red tape and do more to help those fleeing the violence in Ukraine.- Mark Drakeford (@PrifWeinidog) [*March 8, 2022*](https://twitter.com/PrifWeinidog/status/1501113077181341696?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

More than two million people are said to have now fled the war-torn country, with the figure expected to rise as Russia keeps up its bombardment of civilian areas.

In a tweet, Mr Drakeford wrote: "Wales is ready to support refugees from Ukraine but more needs to be done to ensure safe and easy travel routes are available.

"The UK Government needs to revisit its immigration policies to cut the red tape and do more to help those fleeing the violence in Ukraine."

Mr Drakeford has repeatedly said Wales is ready to welcome refugees and he had been holding urgent talks with local authority leaders to ensure preparations are in place.

Leader of the opposition and Welsh Conservatives Andrew RT Davies wrote in the Sunday Times that Labour ministers must ensure there is capacity in housing and other public services for the refugees or "run the risk of succeeding in warm words and hot air while failing to meet the needs of vulnerable people".

In response, a Welsh Government spokesman today said: "The UK Government is responsible for immigration policy and they are failing to provide a simple and secure process to allow ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** into the country.

We don't know yet when people may begin arriving from Ukraine or how many may come but we're prepared to support all those who do

Jane Hutt, Welsh minister for social justice

"This is completely unacceptable. The UK Government must immediately cut red tape and do more to help those fleeing the terrible violence in Ukraine - this is about people not process."

At a press briefing, Wales' minister for social justice Jane Hutt said: "The UK government must put in place simple, fast, safe and legal routes to sanctuary to ensure that those seeking sanctuary are able to get here to safety.

"This was the very clear ask of our First Minister, which he made to the UK Prime Minister in recent correspondence, along with the need to remove the requirement for Ukrainians to provide biometric evidence before leaving Ukraine.

"I'm also calling on the UK Government to create a fully funded refugee resettlement scheme, drawing on the previous experience from the Afghan and Syrian programmes."

She added: "Last week, the finance and local government minister and I met local council leaders, the third sector and refugee support partners to make sure we have plans in place in Wales and are ready to receive people from Ukraine as soon as they come.

"Local authorities across Wales have been receiving offers of accommodation from people who have spare rooms available and want to help.

"We don't know yet when people may begin arriving from Ukraine or how many may come but we're prepared to support all those who do.

"There is a strong humanitarian focus across Wales and a strong desire to step forward. We are a nation of sanctuary ready to play our part in response to this devastating crisis."

The Welsh Tories will lead a debate about Ukraine in the Senedd on Wednesday, when they will call on all parties to formally condemn the Russian invasion of the country and show its backing for Nato.

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Health Secretary could not 'offer the time' to host Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650H-FV01-DY4H-K1BH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 10:51 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 781 words

**Byline:** Geraldine Scott

**Highlight:** Sajid Javid said he has discussed with his wife whether it would be possible for the family to host some of those fleeing Russia's invasion.

**Body**

[*Sajid Javid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sajid-javid) said it would be difficult for him to "offer the time" to host ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in his home as he urged those considering signing up to help to be sure they can "fulfil the obligations" of the scheme.

Communities Secretary [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) will set out on later the details of a new programme through which people in the UK can offer to host ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in their homes.

[*Families*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/families) will receive a thank you payment of £350 a month and be expected to commit to a minimum of six months of housing an individual or a group.

But the [*Health Secretary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/health-secretary) said if help cannot be provided this way, there are other methods of offering support.

Mr Javid was asked on BBC Breakfast whether he would consider hosting refugees in his home.

"I'm starting to have a conversation with my wife on that and I think many households - as you say, and I'm pleased you brought this up - are probably thinking about this across the country," he said.

"It's important that anyone that becomes a host, that they can fulfil the obligations of a host, that they can spend time with these families and help, but there are many ways that we can all help and whatever I do at a personal level, I will most certainly be helping."

Mr Javid told LBC that he has donated to the Disasters Emergency Committee appeal for Ukraine.

And he told ITV's Good Morning Britain: "I do think, for me personally, it will be hard to offer the time that I think a host would reasonably (be) expected to have available to help the family that's arriving, to help to integrate them into British society."

Later today you'll be able to sign up for the government's Homes for Ukraine Scheme. It's something tangible we can do to help those fleeing for their livesI urge everyone who can to help- Matt Hancock (@MattHancock) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/MattHancock/status/1503297158388371456?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps, however, said he would apply to join the hosting scheme.

In a tweet he said: "We've spent the past few weeks as a family discussing the devastating situation in Ukraine, and so we intend to apply today to join other UK households in offering our home to provide refuge to Ukrainians until it is safe for them to return to their country."

On Sunday, Mr Gove, was asked if he would take in a Ukrainian refugee.

He told the BBC's Sunday Morning programme: "I'm exploring what I can do, I know that there are others who have. Without going into my personal circumstances, there are a couple of things I need to sort out - but yes."

He said there are potentially "hundreds of thousands of people" in the UK willing to take Ukrainians into their homes through the Government's new sponsorship scheme, which he is due to outline on Monday.

Mr Javid was asked on ITV's [*Good Morning Britain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/good-morning-britain) whether, instead of Britons offering up space, it would be better if the mansions of sanctioned Russian oligarchs were the first place considered.

He said: "Not the first place - I don't think it would be practical to make them the first place - but I do know that that is something that my friend Michael Gove is looking at.

"I think there'll be some legal hurdles to try and do that, but it's right that he looks broadly to see how we can house more and more ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***."

Mr Javid said it is a "sensible approach" to allow Britons to offer refugees places to stay.

"This is an unprecedented situation," he said. "There are, as we've seen across Europe, many millions of refugees and it's right that Britain plays its role and that we have a scheme that allows British families to play their part and to offer sanctuary."

London Mayor Sadiq Khan said it would be a form of "poetic justice" to repurpose the mansions.

He told Times Radio: "I, for some time, with others, have been complaining about those Russian oligarchs close to (Vladimir) Putin, using our city to launder money by buying homes or businesses. And what's doubly heart-breaking about the homes they buy is they're left empty for years. They're not homes, they're gold bricks used to launder money.

"I think the Government should be seizing them, and before selling them - because they'll take some time - they should be using them to house those Ukrainians who are fleeing Ukraine, who we'll be offering a safe haven in London.

"It's a form of poetic justice, but also it's a good use of these many, many empty properties sitting across London simply with dust being gathered inside rather than them being used to house people who need homes."

Asked if he would be willing to host a refugee, Mr Khan told Good Morning Britain: "Personally we won't be able to because of space and other security issues, but I admire the generosity of those Londoners, and we know our city is a very generous city."

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Over 43,000 register to sponsor Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650P-PG01-JCS0-D092-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 15, 2022 Tuesday

Second Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 5

**Length:** 567 words

**Byline:** ASHLEY COWBURN POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

More than 43,000 people have registered their interest in sponsoring ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to stay in their homes - just hours after the government website went live.

Offering those who provide sanctuary a monthly payment of £350, the scheme was formally launched yesterday after days of criticism over the government's handling of the humanitarian crisis following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Michael Gove told MPs it will allow Ukrainian's with no family links to come to the UK and benefit from "unrestricted access" to benefits, employment and healthcare.

The levelling-up secretary added there would be "no limit" to the number of Ukrainian's who can benefit from the scheme.

As of 9.30pm - five hours after being launched - more than 43,000 people had registered their interest in the programme, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities said.

A spokesperson added that the number was was "continuing to rise".

The website - Homes for Ukraine - states: "This bespoke scheme will offer a route to those who want to come to the UK who have someone here willing to provide them with a home.

The website adds: "Sponsors should provide accommodation for as long as they are able, but we have a minimum expectation of 6 months.

"Someone is eligible for the scheme if they are a Ukrainian national or the immediate family member of a Ukrainian national, and were resident in Ukraine prior to 1 January 2022."

It adds those members of the public with a person they wish to sponsor should get in contact with them directly and prepare to fill in a visa application, which will go live on 18 March, with all their details.

"If you don't know anyone who you wish to sponsor you may wish to get in touch with charities, faith groups or local community organisations who are starting to make connections between individuals," it adds.

However, within minutes of the website going live, the link to the registration page was broken, leading users to a page stating that the site "cannot be reached".

Labour MP Mike Kane pointed out that the website had crashed, noting that the ITV journalist Paul Brand had reported that is was not working and that the site could not be reached.

In response, Mr Gove appeared to deny the claim, saying: "I'm very sorry if Paul Brand's internet connection is wonky.

"It seems as though the connection for my honourable friend the member for Rutland and Melton is superior - she has just signed up."

Earlier the transport secretary Grant Shapps announced he would be signing up to the scheme to sponsor a Ukrainian refugee to live with his family.

"We've spent the past few weeks as a family discussing the devastating situation in Ukraine, and so we intend to apply today to join other UK households in offering our home to provide refuge to Ukrainians until it is safe for them to return to their country," he said in a message at lunchtime on Monday.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, click here. To sign the petition click here. If you would like to donate then please click here for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*The Independent demands the British government gives sanctuary to Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64W5-XS51-DY4H-K40H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 26, 2022 Saturday 10:00 PM GMT

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**Section:** EDITORIALS,VOICES; Version:1

**Length:** 580 words

**Byline:** Editorial

**Highlight:** Refugees Welcome: The Independent calls on the government to follow the example of Ireland and Portugal and accept refugees without visas

**Body**

The prime minister has been stronger on rhetoric than on action in responding to the Russian invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine). He has imposed some minor sanctions, including cancelling a football game, but he has held back from levelling with the British people about the cost to us of the kind of meaningful sanctions that would impose significant costs on the Russian economy.

Nor has [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) said anything about our duty to take in [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) from Ukraine, which should be one of our first obligations to the Ukrainian people. There ought to be no hesitation about this. There can be no cavils about Ukrainians being "economic migrants": these are people fleeing a war. Ukraine's neighbours have opened their borders; we, as allies of the Ukrainian people, must show our solidarity in concrete form from further away.

First, we must help Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania as they try to provide food and shelter to the thousands of Ukrainians arriving across their borders; but then we must offer to accommodate our share of refugees here, too. Other countries have done so, with a speed that shames us. Ireland and Portugal have already said that they will accept ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** without requiring visas; the UK should do the same.

The Independent has had its disagreements with Mr Johnson's government about the issue of our membership of the European Union, including over its right of free movement. We have our reservations about the Nationality and Borders Bill currently going through parliament; it would be monstrous, as Sonya Sceats points out in our pages, to criminalise Ukrainians arriving in the UK by the "wrong" routes. We have also praised the government for its willingness to allow Hong Kongers to settle here, and we urge the prime minister, the home secretary and the entire government to show the same compassion in this new emergency.

We have, after all, done this before. When war tore through the Balkans in the 1990s, thousands of refugees were given sanctuary in Britain. And we can do it again. The Local Government Association, representing local councils in England and Wales, and Cosla, its Scottish equivalent, have said that their members stand ready to work with the government to help to resettle refugees. We have throughout the UK a rich ecosystem of charities willing to help mobilise the better angels of the British people in this cause.

This is not just a matter of compassion or even of international law - obligations under the 1951 Geneva Convention on refugees - our sympathy for those fleeing tanks and missiles should be enough. This is also a matter of enlightened self-interest: we believe that, however gloomy Ukraine's prospects seem now, the country will be free and prosperous one day, and we want its people to look favourably on those nations that stood by them in their hour of need. We want them to trade with us, to exchange ideas and people with us, to form bonds of friendship.

If we are not prepared to fight with them against their aggressor - because Vladimir Putin's Russia has nuclear weapons - and yet we proclaim our solidarity with them, we must make it mean something.

Taking in our fair share of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** is the least we can do.

The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0?CMP=ILC-refresh) campaign is calling for the UK government to set up a resettlement scheme to give Ukrainians fleeing the invasion sanctuary in Britain

**Load-Date:** February 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Home Office slammed by Tory MPs over help given to Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y8-G241-JBNF-W0P7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 3:56 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 736 words

**Byline:** Pa Political Staff

**Highlight:** Priti Patel also faced calls to resign as Home Secretary for telling MPs that a visa application centre had been set up en route to Calais.

**Body**

Conservative MPs have joined the opposition in launching a furious attack on the Home Office's slow response in allowing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to enter the UK.

[*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) also faced calls to resign as [*Home Secretary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-secretary) for telling MPs that a visa application centre had been set up en route to Calais while staff were in the French port city.

Sir [*Roger Gale*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/roger-gale) , Conservative MP for North Thanet, told the Commons: "That was untrue and under any normal administration that in itself would be a resignation (issue).

"There is no visa centre at Lille yet, in spite of the fact that the Foreign Secretary earlier this morning said that there was."

This is a disgrace. When the minister leaves the despatch box I ask him to go back to the Home Office and tell them to get a grip

Conservative MP Alec Shelbrooke

[*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) minister [*Kevin Foster*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kevin-foster) argued Ms Patel had "clarified her remarks" on Monday before dismissing calls to grant a visa waiver for all Ukrainians due to the need for "key security checks".

He also confirmed 500 visas have been issued and the Ukraine family scheme visa has received more than 10,000 applications since its launch on Friday.

But Conservative former immigration minister Mark Harper said the Government needs to "grip the pace of this" while Andrew Murrison, another ex-Tory minister, asked why the Republic of Ireland has welcomed more than 2,000 refugees from Ukraine but the UK has "come nowhere even close to that".

Conservative MP Alec Shelbrooke (Elmet and Rothwell) said: "We don't want to stand in this House and listen to plans and processes, we want dates, we want action and the Home Office must react far more quickly than it's doing and get to the point of hubs of people, get them processed and get them in.

"This is a disgrace. When the minister leaves the despatch box I ask him to go back to the Home Office and tell them to get a grip."

Siobhan Baillie, Conservative MP for Stroud, added: "Stroud people want to understand what the chuff is going on."

Conservative MP Julian Sturdy said his York Outer constituents are ready and willing to offer help, adding: "The only barrier to their support seems to be Home Office bureaucracy. Now is not the time for box ticking and red tape, now is the time to do everything we can; no more excuses, we have to move the process forward, we have to speed it up."

Jason McCartney highlighted the "vibrant" Ukrainian community in his Colne Valley constituency, with the Tory MP adding: "We've done so much on sanctions, on humanitarian aid and on military aid so why are we dragging our feet with all this bureaucracy?"

He said the visa centres "need to be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, all the helplines need to be manned 24 hours a day", adding: "Can he assure me that by the weekend thousands and thousands more desperate ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** will be safe here in the UK with their family and friends?"

Mr Foster said staff numbers are being boosted, adding: "We're certainly looking to expand where we can the visa application capacity."

Conservative former minister Steve Brine said the UK needs to "deliver a generous scheme" for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** with first steps in place by Wednesday.

He said: "All of this is far too robotic and, to take up the point made on the other side, there is very little Christian compassion being shown at the moment."

Conservative former minister Damian Green told the minister: "I take his point about security and the need for biometric checks. I don't understand why those biometric checks can't be done in this country when we have got people safe and sound."

Mr Foster replied: "Those who are applying to this are actually in safe countries as we speak.

"There's no requirement for people ... to stay in Ukraine to make an application, in fact there is no need at all if they can safely make their way across the border to one of the safe and democratic countries next door that we are supporting to provide support to those that are crossing the border."

For Labour, shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper said: "Two million refugees have left Ukraine. Other countries are supporting hundreds and thousands of people. The Home Office is currently issuing just around 250 family scheme visas a day.

"Most want to stay close to home but some want to come here to join family or friends, and we should be helping them. Instead most people are still being held up by our Home Office bureaucracy or being turned away."

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*What the Biden administration could be doing - but isn't - to support Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652P-P5S1-JBNF-W2M3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 24, 2022 Thursday 7:43 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 2461 words

**Byline:** Rachel Sharp

**Highlight:** WAR IN UKRAINE: Polish President Andrzej Duda has been calling on the US to better support the escalating refugee crisis caused by Russia's war on Ukraine. On Thursday, President Joe Biden will finally announce that the US is welcoming up to 100,000 refugees. Here, Rachel Sharp outlines what else the Biden administration could do to support ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***

**Body**

More than 3.6 million [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) have left [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) in the month since [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) invaded its neighbour, while a further 6.5 million men, women and children are internally displaced within their home country, according to the UN.

Poland has welcomed over 2.1 million refugees into the country, while other European nations have also given temporary shelter to hundreds of thousands.

Meanwhile, efforts from the US have been nominal - with so few Ukrainians taking refuge in the country that the numbers aren't even tallied in the UN's database.

Finally, on the one-month anniversary of the day the war began, President Joe Biden is set to unveil plans to welcome up to 100,000 Ukrainians and other refugees fleeing the country into the US.

A senior administration official said that the president will announce the commitment during his trip to Europe this week, where he is attending an emergency NATO meeting in Brussels on Thursday before traveling to Poland on Friday.

Few details are clear about the process for taking in refugees but the Biden administration is expected to offer entry through nonimmigrant and immigrant visas and the US Refugee Admissions Program.

It's a move that comes after pressure has been mounting on the US to do more to support ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** as officials have spent weeks making several statements pledging support - but failed to back it up with concrete action in terms of immigration policies.

On 12 March, Poland's President Andrzej Duda called on the US to "speed up" the processing of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have relatives already living in the US.

Speaking alongside Vice President Kamala Harris at a press conference in Warsaw, he warned that without more help from Western allies "this will end up in a refugee disaster".

Ms Harris said the US would support Poland with its "burden" and unveiled more financial support for refugees but remained evasive around whether the US would accept Ukrainians who evacuated from their country.

"The United States is absolutely prepared to do what we can and what we must to support Poland, in terms of the burden that they have taken on," she said.

When pressed around whether the US would "make a specific allocation for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***," the vice president laughed nervously and refused to commit either way, brushing off the question with: "A friend in need is a friend indeed."

The same day, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki claimed that the "best way" the US can help the refugee crisis is by funding the neighbouring countries taking in Ukrainian evacuees, saying that the "vast, vast, vast majority of refugees" want to stay in Europe.

Despite these claims, reports have emerged of Ukrainians wanting to join family members already living in the US - but being refused entry by US officials.

Prior to the announcement that 100,000 refugees would be welcomed into the US, The Independent spoke to an immigration law expert about the various ways the US can support ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. Here's how:

Reunite Ukrainians with relatives in the US

With around 350,000 Ukrainian immigrants currently live in the US, according to US Census estimates, for some ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** their closest family members and support networks are based in America.

Maryna Seifi, a Ukrainian-American living in California, told CBS that she flew to Poland to meet her two teenage relatives, 19 and 16, as they escaped from Odesa and crossed the Ukrainian border.

She said that they all reunited in PrzemyÅl and went to the US Embassy where they were told that the two teens were not allowed to fly to the US.

"They have no sympathy, no understanding. Even when I say I'm an American citizen that wants to take my kids," she said.

The US State Department currently has no exceptions for Ukrainians wanting to join their family members in America, with Ukrainians only being considered for US resettlement if the countries they have fled to are deemed to be unsafe. As Poland is not, families like Ms Seifi's are unable to stay together.

Greg Siskind, an immigration lawyer and founder of Siskind Susser Immigration Lawyers, told The Independent that it has been "extremely frustrating" for US citizens and permanent residents who are trying to bring their Ukrainian relatives to their homes in America.

"There has been no communication from the State Department and no accommodations for them," he said.

"All the US has said is that Ukrainians are now stateless so they can be processed in other consulates."

Ukrainians would need to get a visa appointment at the consulate and, at the moment, there are backlogs for many months.

"The big problem is the consular system is so broken that most still haven't resumed routine operations after Covid," he said.

While details are scarce, Mr Biden's plans to support refugees are now expected to include a focus on reuniting people with family members in the US.

Set up a special parole program

President Biden has the power to provide an instant solution to this problem by setting up a special parole program that would allow ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** with close family members in the US to enter the country on a temporary basis, Mr Siskind told The Independent.

"It would be an aggressive use of section 212D - parole authority to the president - where the president has the authority to let anyone into the US without a visa for urgent humanitarian or public policy reasons," he said.

"Biden can do that himself immediately. He could announce that today just for family members."

Mr Siskind said that such a move would fit with the US's immigration policies around family reunification.

"A key part of US immigration policy is to reunite immigrant families," he said.

"So there is no need to even prove a humanitarian aspect -it would be a super easy, fast application process as they would only have to demonstrate that they have close family members in the US."

Port parole

An even quicker way to welcome Ukrainians into the US would be through port parole.

This would reduce the influx of applications - and therefore the lengthy delays in waiting for a visa appointment - by allowing refugees to skip that step and board an evacuation flight to the US.

Once at a US airport, or another port of entry, Customs Border and Protection (CBP) officers would then make a determination on the spot whether to grant access.

For Ukrainians with family members already in the US, Mr Siskind said that this could be a question of airport officers simply checking their documents for evidence of their relationships to their family members.

Extend Temporary Protected Status

In early March, the Biden administration announced it was granting Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to Ukrainians fleeing from the war.

Under the move, Ukrainians without legal documentation can stay and work legally in the US for 18 months.

Around 75,000 people will be shielded from deportation back to the war zone because of this rule so long as they apply by 28 August.

However, TPS only applies to Ukrainians who were already in the US by 1 March, denying access to the more than one million mostly women and children who have evacuated from the country since then and the thousands that continue to cross the Ukrainian border each day.

This is somewhat opposite to the support from the European Commission which has granted a Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) to Ukrainians, allowing them to stay and work in EU countries if they left the country from 24 February onwards.

People on TPS also can't necessarily convert their status into US citizenship or permanent residency.

After the 18-month period, the US can extend the TPS for longer and has done so for many countries.

For now though, the president could also redesignate TPS eligibility to change the date so that it applies to ââUkrainian nationals arriving into the US after 1 March.

Other than the TPS, the only action taken by the US to make it easier for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to enter the country has been the launch of a "trying to be nice memo" from the USCIS, said Mr Siskind, such as forgiving things like missing deadlines on application processes.

Reviving the Lautenberg program

One thing that could also have an immediate impact would be to allow Ukrainians who have applied under the Lautenberg program to travel to America while their applications are still processing.

The Lautenberg Program allows members of certain religious minority groups such as Jews and Evangelical Christians from the former Soviet Union to apply to be reunited with family members already in the US.

Mr Siskind said the program was initially set up to enable around a million people to move out of the former Soviet Union countries, with notable immigrants who moved to the US through the programme including Google cofounder Sergey Brin.

While it still exists today, it is rarely used.

"Reviving the program could make a difference," said Mr Siskind.

"It could be a way for people who are Jewish and of other religions to come to the US."

Welcome Ukrainians working for US employees overseas

Mr Siskind said he had heard of several US tech companies who either directly or indirectly employed staff in Ukraine seeking ways to get these team members into America where they can continue with their work for the company.

The Ukrainian mother who was killed alongside her two children while trying to escape from Irpin into Kyiv this week was identified as a Silicon Valley employee.

Tatiana Perebeinis, her son Nikita and daughter Alise were targeted by a Russian mortar blast as they tried to dash across a bridge.

A photo showing the bodies of the family members lying in the road sent shockwaves around the world and has become one of the most harrowing images of Russia's aggression on innocent civilians.

Ms Perebeinis worked for Silicon Valley tech startup SE Ranking as its chief accountant.

"US employers have been trying to figure out how they can get people like them to the US where they can continue to work," said Mr Siskind.

"The president can also use a parole program to admit people to the US to continue with their employment focusing on the public policy around labour shortage and helping US companies that are losing critical workers."

In the short-term, not only does this help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** flee from the war zone.

But it can also help the US in the midst of its labour shortage and, in the long-term, it could pave the way for permanent residency for Ukrainian workers in the US.

Increase the cap on refugees

The Biden administration set the cap for the number of refugees the US would accept in the 2022 budget year to 125,000 - not including the 76,000 Afghan refugees who arrived following the country's withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan.

This is far higher than the record low of 15,000 set under Donald Trump, and it is likely that the 100,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to be welcomed into the US will not be included in the 125,000.

However, the US can increase the cap further to support its European allies in welcoming in some of the more than 3.6 million Ukrainians who have left their country.

Open up the ESTA to Ukrainians

Non-US citizens travelling to the US typically must first get a visa or travel authorisation.

One of the quickest, simplest ways to get authorisation to travel is to apply for an ESTA with Customs Border and Protection (CBP).

The process is automated, typically takes just 72 hours to approve and costs $14 so an increase in applicants from Ukraine should not result in lengthy delays.

However, Ukraine is not on the list of countries on this Visa Waiver Program because the visa denial rate for Ukrainians is far higher than the 3 per cent cutoff to be added to the list.

To get around this, the Biden administration could open up the ESTA to Ukrainians.

Create a special refugee program for Ukrainians

The Biden administration can also create a refugee program for Ukrainians evacuating the country.

However, Mr Siskind said that setting up a refugee program is a "big endeavour" that would take time to set up.

It is also more difficult to be granted asylum or refugee status, as this requires people proving that they are facing persecution, he said.

"Not just that a place is generally dangerous but that you are singled out by a group," he said.

Supporting Russian refugees

As well as providing better support for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, calls are growing for the US to also support refugees fleeing Russia.

Journalists from independent news outlets have fled the country as President Vladimir Putin cracks down on media freedom.

Some experts have suggested that Russian soldiers - many of whom reportedly didn't know they were being sent into combat and had been told Ukrainians would welcome them - could also be looking for a chance to defect and gain asylum overseas.

"Don't assume Russian soldiers and officers like what they are doing," tweeted Duke University economist Timur Kuran.

"Some - we can't know many, because preference falsification is inherently invisible - must be willing to break ranks, if only they have options. Let EU and NATO countries offer asylum to Russian military defectors."

Mr Siskind said that a program to fast track refugee status for defecting soldiers would be popular with the US public and Ukrainians -as it would "hurt" the Russian military amid its assault on Ukraine.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees living in EU forced to travel back for abortions, study warns*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6886-S161-JBNF-W35Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 18, 2023 Thursday 8:56 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:3

**Length:** 650 words

**Byline:** Maya Oppenheim

**Highlight:** ‘These women can travel back and forth but it doesn’t mean that it’s peaceful or normal travel’

**Body**

[*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) women who sought refuge in [*European Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/european-union) countries are being forced to travel through dangerous conflict zones to access [*abortions*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/abortion) and [*contraception*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/contraception) in their native country, a study has warned.

Research found some women from Ukraine now living in [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) , [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) and [*Slovakia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/slovakia) are having to temporarily return home as it is “easier” to access reproductive healthcare there, despite the stress of travelling back into the wartorn country.

The study, by the Center for Reproductive Rights and eight human rights organisations, warned refugees are being put “at risk” as they grapple with issues such as legal restrictions and cost barriers when trying to access the right care.

Other barriers include “information shortfalls, poor quality care” as well as “institutional racism and substandard care”, it said.

Krystyna Kacpura, of the Federa Foundation for Women and Family Planning in Poland, an NGO involved in the report, said Ukrainian women have struggled to come to terms with the fact “there is no real access” to abortion in Poland and that other reproductive health services, such as emergency contraception, are “very limited”.

Anastasiia Podorozhnia, of Martynka, a Ukrainian organisation also based in Poland, added: “We were approached by a teenage girl, already of legal age, asking where to get the morning after pill in Poland, because she went to a pharmacy and they looked at her so strangely and she, as a person from Ukraine, didn’t expect that.”

Almost 8 million Ukrainians have been forced to leave the country since Russia launched an invasion in February last year, with women and children making up the majority of refugees.

Leah Hoctor, a senior regional director at the Center for Reproductive Rights, said: “The European Union has promised to provide refugees from Ukraine with sanctuary and care.

“Yet women from Ukraine who are now in Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia often experience a very different reality when they need sexual and reproductive healthcare. Instead of care and protection, they regularly face an obstacle course of restrictions, confusion, stigma and discrimination.”

Ms Hoctor warned the “health and wellbeing” of some ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are being put “at risk” by an inability to access “time-sensitive healthcare and support services” which is exacerbating “the harm they have endured” from Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

Anna Ivanyi, of the Emma Association in Hungary, another organisation involved in the research, explained female refugees from Ukraine return to their homeland as it is “easier for them to go home and get the pill or the abortion pill” as medical abortions are not permitted in Hungary.

“These women can travel back and forth between Ukraine and Hungary, but it doesn’t mean that it’s peaceful or normal travel,” she added. “It’s very stressful for them.”

Yulia\*, who is from Ukraine but is now living in Romania, claimed women “are driving back” to the western part of Ukraine from other countries to find a doctor “and doing what they used to” because they do not have other options.

Refugees subjected to rape and sexual assault in Ukraine linked to the conflict are also struggling to get the right support after leaving their home country, the research said.

Ms Kacpura said she has spoken to women in their 40s with families who have burst into tears as they told her they were raped.

“But they said, ‘please don’t tell anybody, because I have my family, and my husband has been fighting,’” Ms Kacpura added. She said refugees say: “’Could you imagine if I add to his troubles? What if he comes from the war and sees an additional child?’… When I explain to them that they can obtain legal abortion in Poland if they report and get a prosecutor’s certificate, they say: ‘My life, my family is the most important for me right now.’”

\*Name changed to protect identity

**Load-Date:** May 18, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Italy gets creative in effort to help Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6526-63B1-F072-442H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 22, 2022 Tuesday

First Edition

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**Section:** WORLD; Pg. 26

**Length:** 803 words

**Byline:** SOFIA BARBARANI

**Body**

Local governments in Italy's Marche region are calling for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to be housed in some of the emergency accommodation set up to shelter Italian families displaced by a series of deadly earthquakes in 2016.

With Russia's invasion of Ukraine now in its fourth week, nearly 3.5 million people have fled from the country, and more than 50,000 of them have sought safety in Italy, including 25,846 women, 20,478 children and 4,325 men, according to the Italian interior ministry.

While most refugees are expected to resettle in major cities such as Milan, Rome, Naples and Bologna, some have reached smaller towns and villages in Umbria, Marche, and northern Lazio, where six years ago a magnitude 6.0 earthquake devastated entire cities, uprooting tens of thousands of people and killing hundreds.

What was introduced by the Italian government as a temporary solution for homeless families lasted for years, becoming a daily reminder of Italy's stagnant bureaucracy and failure to rebuild.For years, the rural landscape in these areas has been punctuated by wooden cabins and prefabricated homes.

This month, after years in limbo, 82 families in Amatrice left their emergency accommodation when they were handed the keys to what they hope will be their forever homes. "Amatrice begins to have a home: we were all waiting for this moment; it's the start of normalisation," mayor Giovanni Legnini said during a ceremony earlier this month.

But while some Italian families finally have a place to call home,millions of Ukrainians have just lost theirs.

"The reconstruction [of Italy's damaged towns] has truly kicked off, and so the first emergency homes have been freed up, and the emotional wave fuelled by Russia's aggression has been so significant that it led mayors to make a brave decision," Guido Castelli, the head of reconstruction in the Marche region and former mayor of Ascoli Piceno, told The Independent.

Roughly 61 out of the approximately 1,900 emergency homes are free to house refugees, he continued. "It's a symbolic number, but equally symbolic is the willingness by an already suffering community to welcome others that are suffering," said Mr Castelli, who is working with the region's mayors to bring this project to fruition.

The refugees' living costs will be funded by the state, and with cabin sizes ranging from 40 to 80 sq m, families will not have to be separated. "This population weakened and made fragile by the seismic sequence of 2016 hasn't looked away from those who are suffering," said Mr Castelli.

The government is expecting to welcome a minimum of 60,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** for roughly three months - taking in up to 175,000 in total. Family groups will receive approximately Euro 600 to 900 a month (around £500-750), depending on the number of people.

The first bus reached the Slovenia-Italy border on 28 February, just four days after Russia's invasion. Approximately 50 people were on board, including two men, and most said they were intending to stay with family and friends in the north of the country, according to news agency ANSA.

But in awarthat shows no sign ofabating,thenumber of Ukrainians forced to flee will undoubtedly increase, and those arriving are likely to continue toneed government help.

Along with Italy's government, volunteers have mobilised across the peninsula to provide accommodation and safety for the tens of thousands who have so far arrived. Private individuals and monasteries have opened their doors, abandoned homes are in the process of being fixed up, and other homes are being rented by the state.

The interior ministry has also announced plans to convert properties seized from the mafia and convert them into temporary refugee housing centres. Last week, the head of the state unit that deals with confiscating such buildings said that 500 of them had been identified, but added that it was impossible to know how many would actually be used.

Many refugees are also staying with members of the already significant Ukrainian community in Italy, which is one of the largest in Europe. Before the start of the conflict in Ukraine and the ensuing exodus, the Mediterranean country was estimated to be home to about a quarter of a million Ukrainians.

However, the head of the cultural association Ukrainian Community Marche warned that Italian families hosting refugees were beginning to feel the financial strain.

"There's no financial help from the local government for these families," said the president of the organisation, who preferred not to give her name. The solution, she said, was not to give families long-term accommodation, but to find them short-term homes in as little time as possible.

"It was different for the earthquake victims, they had nowhere to go," she said. "If the war ends, these people will go back home that same day."

**Load-Date:** March 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*What the Biden administration could be doing - but isn't - to support Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YT-YBN1-JBNF-W1CK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 11, 2022 Friday 12:50 AM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:2

**Length:** 2318 words

**Byline:** Rachel Sharp

**Highlight:** WAR IN UKRAINE: Polish President Andrzej Duda has called on the US to better support the escalating refugee crisis caused by Russia's war on Ukraine. Meanwhile, the White House is yet to commit to accepting Ukrainians into the US. Here, Rachel Sharp outlines some of the many ways that the Biden administration could be doing more to support ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***

**Body**

More than 2.3 million [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) have left [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) in the two weeks since [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) invaded its neighbour - a number that officials have said could rise to 4 million within a matter of days.

UN figures reveal that Poland has welcomed over 1.4 million refugees, while other European countries have taken in more than 250,000.

Efforts from the US meanwhile have been nominal - with so few Ukrainians taking refuge in the country that the numbers aren't even tallied in the UN's database.

In recent days, [*Joe Biden's*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/biden) administration has made several statements pledging support for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** - but is yet to back them up with concrete action in terms of immigration policies.

On Thursday, Poland's President Andrzej Duda called on the US to "speed up" the processing of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have relatives already living in the US.

Speaking alongside Vice President Kamala Harris at a press conference in Warsaw, he warned that without more help from Western allies "this will end up in a refugee disaster".

Ms Harris said the US would support Poland with its "burden" and unveiled more financial support for refugees but remained evasive around whether the US will accept Ukrainians who evacuated from their country.

"The United States is absolutely prepared to do what we can and what we must to support Poland, in terms of the burden that they have taken on," she said.

When pressed around whether the US would "make a specific allocation for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***," the vice president laughed nervously and refused to commit either way, brushing off the question with: "A friend in need is a friend indeed."

The same day, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki claimed that the "best way" the US can help the refugee crisis is by funding the neighbouring countries taking in Ukrainian evacuees, saying that the "vast, vast, vast majority of refugees" want to stay in Europe.

"The vast, vast, vast majority of refugees we believe will want to stay in neighbouring countries in Europe where many of them have family, many of them have worked, many of them have friends and others - that is our assessment," she said at her press conference.

Despite these claims, reports have emerged of Ukrainians wanting to join family members already living in the US - but being refused entry by US officials.

Here's how the US can do more to support ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***:

Reunite Ukrainians with relatives in the US

With around 350,000 Ukrainian immigrants currently live in the US, according to US Census estimates, for some ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** their closest family members and support networks are based in America.

Maryna Seifi, a Ukrainian-American living in California, told CBSthat she flew to Poland to meet her two teenage relatives, 19 and 16, as they escaped from Odesa and crossed the Ukrainian border.

She said that they all reunited in PrzemyÅl and went to the US Embassy where they were told that the two teens were not allowed to fly to the US.

"They have no sympathy, no understanding. Even when I say I'm an American citizen that wants to take my kids," she said.

The US State Department currently has no exceptions for Ukrainians wanting to join their family members in America, with Ukrainians only being considered for US resettlement if the countries they have fled to are deemed to be unsafe. As Poland is not, families like Ms Seifi's are unable to stay together.

Greg Siskind, an immigration lawyer and founder of Siskind Susser Immigration Lawyers, told The Independent that it has been "extremely frustrating" for US citizens and permanent residents who are trying to bring their Ukrainian relatives to their homes in America.

"There has been no communication from the State Department and no accommodations for them," he said.

"All the US has said is that Ukrainians are now stateless so they can be processed in other consulates."

Ukrainians would need to get a visa appointment at the consulate and, at the moment, there are backlogs for many months.

"The big problem is the consular system is so broken that most still haven't resumed routine operations after Covid," he said.

Set up a special parole program

President Biden has the power to provide an instant solution to this problem by setting up a special parole program that would allow ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** with close family members in the US to enter the country on a temporary basis, Mr Siskind told The Independent.

"It would be an aggressive use of section 212D - parole authority to the president - where the president has the authority to let anyone into the US without a visa for urgent humanitarian or public policy reasons," he said.

"Biden can do that himself immediately. He could announce that today just for family members."

Mr Siskind said that such a move would fit with the US's immigration policies around family reunification.

"A key part of US immigration policy is to reunite immigrant families," he said.

"So there is no need to even prove a humanitarian aspect -it would be a super easy, fast application process as they would only have to demonstrate that they have close family members in the US."

Port parole

An even quicker way to welcome Ukrainians into the US would be through port parole.

This would reduce the influx of applications - and therefore the lengthy delays in waiting for a visa appointment - by allowing refugees to skip that step and board an evacuation flight to the US.

Once at a US airport, or another port of entry, Customs Border and Protection (CBP) officers would then make a determination on the spot whether to grant access.

For Ukrainians with family members already in the US, Mr Siskind said that this could be a question of airport officers simply checking their documents for evidence of their relationships to their family members.

Extend Temporary Protected Status

Last week, the Biden administration announced it was granting Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to Ukrainians fleeing from the war.

Under the move, Ukrainians without legal documentation can stay and work legally in the US for 18 months.

Around 75,000 people will be shielded from deportation back to the war zone because of this rule so long as they apply by 28 August.

However, TPS only applies to Ukrainians who were already in the US by 1 March, denying access to the more than one million mostly women and children who have evacuated from the country since then and the thousands that continue to cross the Ukrainian border each day.

This is somewhat opposite to the support from the European Commission which has granted a Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) to Ukrainians, allowing them to stay and work in EU countries if they left the country from 24 February onwards.

People on TPS also can't necessarily convert their status into US citizenship or permanent residency.

After the 18-month period, the US can extend the TPS for longer and has done so for many countries.

For now though, the president could also redesignate TPS eligibility to change the date so that it applies to ââUkrainian nationals arriving into the US after 1 March.

Other than the TPS, the only action taken by the US to make it easier for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to enter the country has been the launch of a "trying to be nice memo" from the USCIS, said Mr Siskind, such as forgiving things like missing deadlines on application processes.

Reviving the Lautenberg program

One thing that could also have an immediate impact would be to allow Ukrainians who have applied under the Lautenberg program to travel to America while their applications are still processing.

The Lautenberg Program allows members of certain religious minority groups such as Jews and Evangelical Christians from the former Soviet Union to apply to be reunited with family members already in the US.

Mr Siskind said the program was initially set up to enable around a million people to move out of the former Soviet Union countries, with notable immigrants who moved to the US through the programme including Google cofounder Sergey Brin.

While it still exists today, it is rarely used.

"Reviving the program could make a difference," said Mr Siskind.

"It could be a way for people who are Jewish and of other religions to come to the US."

Welcome Ukrainians working for US employees overseas

Over the last two weeks, Mr Siskind said he has heard of several US tech companies who either directly or indirectly employed staff in Ukraine seeking ways to get these team members into America where they can continue with their work for the company.

The Ukrainian mother who was killed alongside her two children while trying to escape from Irpin into Kyiv this week was identified as a Silicon Valley employee.

Tatiana Perebeinis, her son Nikita and daughter Alise were targeted by a Russian mortar blast as they tried to dash across a bridge.

A photo showing the bodies of the family members lying in the road sent shockwaves around the world and has become one of the most harrowing images of Russia's aggression on innocent civilians.

Ms Perebeinis worked for Silicon Valley tech startup SE Ranking as its chief accountant.

"US employers have been trying to figure out how they can get people like them to the US where they can continue to work," said Mr Siskind.

"The president can also use a parole program to admit people to the US to continue with their employment focusing on the public policy around labour shortage and helping US companies that are losing critical workers."

In the short-term, not only does this help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** flee from the war zone.

But it can also help the US in the midst of its labour shortage and, in the long-term, it could pave the way for permanent residency for Ukrainian workers in the US.

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While this is far higher than the record low of 15,000 set under Donald Trump, the US can increase the cap further to support its European allies in welcoming in some of the more than two million Ukrainians who have left their country in the last two weeks.

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**Load-Date:** March 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*New course to help families hosting Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65FW-VH71-DY4H-K2K8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 16, 2022 Monday 12:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 608 words

**Byline:** Catherine Lough

**Highlight:** The Open University programme will teach aspects of Ukrainian history, language and culture.

**Body**

An online course on Ukrainian culture and language is to be launched to help UK families hosting refugees.

The [*Open University*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/open-university) (OU) will launch the course later this summer, and it says it has been developed by leading academics.

The move is part of a range of measures supported by the OU, including free online resources for Ukrainians such as [*English*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/english) language courses and mental health support through the platform OpenLearn.

The university has waived fees for current Ukrainian students, and prospective students from Ukraine can apply for 12 sanctuary scholarship places worth £240,000.

We will continue to mobilise our resources across the university to show our support for Ukrainians

Tim Blackman, Open University vice-chancellor

Vice-chancellor Tim Blackman said the university is "appalled" by the situation in Ukraine and it wants to support people "in the best way we can, by providing free online learning, scholarships and financial assistance for Ukrainians as they seek refuge in the UK, as well as educational resources for UK host families".

He added: "We believe that accessible education is a powerful tool for improving people's lives and will continue to mobilise our resources across the university to show our support for Ukrainians."

Minister for higher and further education Michelle Donelan said: "Our world-leading universities have always been underpinned by the core values of freedom and liberty, and so it is great to see how many have been standing united with Ukraine by throwing open their doors to students displaced by this terrible war.

"These initiatives from the Open University are a fantastic way to support those fleeing armed conflict or persecution in their home nation who need help rebuilding their lives.

"Separately, this [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) has provided up to £4 million for institutions to support Ukrainian students who may be facing hardship.

"We are currently working with universities in the UK to explore what support can be given to Ukrainian universities in order to help them continue teaching their students remotely, alongside where we can go further in ensuring Ukrainian students can access finance to support their studies - with more information on this in due course."

Great to see that [*@OpenUniversity*](https://twitter.com/OpenUniversity?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) has launched a new scholarship programme for people displaced by conflict or crisis. Sanctuary Scholars will be able to study degree programmes or our Access courses, including those leading to [*@OUComputing*](https://twitter.com/OUComputing?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) qualifications [*https://t.co/ZloTRbUc79*](https://t.co/ZloTRbUc79) - Arosha Bandara (@arosha) [*May 11, 2022*](https://twitter.com/arosha/status/1524404287299887104?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Mirjam Hauck, associate head of the school of languages and applied linguistics at the OU and the course lead for the programme on Ukrainian culture and language, said she hopes a community will develop between students throughout the course so learners can share experience and insights.

"As well as learning the language, course participants will find out about what Ukraine was like before the invasion, its geography, healthcare and education systems, history, and ethnic and religious diversity.

"Ukrainian will be taught via the medium of English, but some key information, such as differences between the healthcare and education systems in the UK and Ukraine, will also be available in Ukrainian, so it can be shared directly with Ukrainian friends."

The news comes following an announcement by [*Oxford University*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/oxford-university) earlier in May of a new fully-funded graduate scholarship scheme for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

The scholarship will begin in the 2022-23 academic year, seeking to support highly-qualified graduates from Ukraine whose lives have been seriously disrupted by the ongoing conflict.

**Load-Date:** May 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Levi's halts sales of jeans in Russia and pledges $300,000 in donations to Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y8-9FM1-JBNF-W42C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 2:58 PM GMT

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**Section:** FASHION,LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 365 words

**Byline:** Kate Ng

**Highlight:** The firm joins other brands including Asos, Nike, Chanel and Gucci in ceasing trade in Russia

**Body**

Levi's has become the latest in a string of retail companies to halt commercial sales in [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) as its invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) continues.

The American clothing company [*said in a statement*](https://www.levistrauss.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/HumanitarianAid_362022.pdf) that it will also donate thousands of dollars in humanitarian aid to ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) and pledged to support its employees, partners and their families who are affected by the decision to halt sales.

The company will donate more than US$300,000 to non-profit organisations providing aid to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, with US$200,000 going to the International Rescue Committee and US$100,000 to CARE.

Levi's is also offering to "two-to-one match" of employees' donations up to US$200,000 to a number of organisations that are "committed to ensuring that the most vulnerable communities get the support they need".

On Thursday 24 February, Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which has resulted in an estimated two million Ukrainians fleeing the war. The UK, the US and the EU have since imposed sanctions on Russia.

"Given the enormous disruption occurring in the region, which makes normal business untenable, Levi Strauss & Co (LS&Co) is temporarily suspending commercial operations in Russia, including any new investments," the statement said.

"LS&Co and its licensee partners are also working to donate jackets, backpacks and warm clothing to people who have been displaced from their homes," it added.

The retailer said it "continues to be saddened by the devastating conflict in Ukraine and our thoughts are with all of those who have been affected, including our employees, partners and their loved ones".

About four per cent of Levi's total net revenues came from Eastern Europe in 2021, with about half of that related to Russia, according to the statement.

"But any business considerations are clearly secondary to the human suffering experienced by so many," it added.

Last week, the parent companies of luxury fashion brands such as Hermes, Chanel, Givenchy and Gucci [*announced store closures in Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/fashion/hermes-lvmh-fashion-brands-russia-war-b2029277.html) following the invasion of Ukraine.

Ikea [*also announced it suspended activities*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ikea-suspends-activities-russia-belarus-ukraine-b2027770.html) in Russia and Belarus, and other fashion brands including Asos, Nike and Boohoo have ceased trading in Russia.

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*What the Biden administration could be doing - but isn't - to support Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6504-BHJ1-DY4H-K0PF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 12, 2022 Saturday 3:46 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:2

**Length:** 2461 words

**Byline:** Rachel Sharp

**Highlight:** WAR IN UKRAINE: Polish President Andrzej Duda has been calling on the US to better support the escalating refugee crisis caused by Russia's war on Ukraine. On Thursday, President Joe Biden will finally announce that the US is welcoming up to 100,000 refugees. Here, Rachel Sharp outlines what else the Biden administration could do to support ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***

**Body**

More than 3.6 million [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) have left [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) in the month since [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) invaded its neighbour, while a further 6.5 million men, women and children are internally displaced within their home country, according to the UN.

Poland has welcomed over 2.1 million refugees into the country, while other European nations have also given temporary shelter to hundreds of thousands.

Meanwhile, efforts from the US have been nominal - with so few Ukrainians taking refuge in the country that the numbers aren't even tallied in the UN's database.

Finally, on the one-month anniversary of the day the war began, President Joe Biden is set to unveil plans to welcome up to 100,000 Ukrainians and other refugees fleeing the country into the US.

A senior administration official said that the president will announce the commitment during his trip to Europe this week, where he is attending an emergency NATO meeting in Brussels on Thursday before traveling to Poland on Friday.

Few details are clear about the process for taking in refugees but the Biden administration is expected to offer entry through nonimmigrant and immigrant visas and the US Refugee Admissions Program.

It's a move that comes after pressure has been mounting on the US to do more to support ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** as officials have spent weeks making several statements pledging support - but failed to back it up with concrete action in terms of immigration policies.

On 12 March, Poland's President Andrzej Duda called on the US to "speed up" the processing of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have relatives already living in the US.

Speaking alongside Vice President Kamala Harris at a press conference in Warsaw, he warned that without more help from Western allies "this will end up in a refugee disaster".

Ms Harris said the US would support Poland with its "burden" and unveiled more financial support for refugees but remained evasive around whether the US would accept Ukrainians who evacuated from their country.

"The United States is absolutely prepared to do what we can and what we must to support Poland, in terms of the burden that they have taken on," she said.

When pressed around whether the US would "make a specific allocation for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***," the vice president laughed nervously and refused to commit either way, brushing off the question with: "A friend in need is a friend indeed."

The same day, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki claimed that the "best way" the US can help the refugee crisis is by funding the neighbouring countries taking in Ukrainian evacuees, saying that the "vast, vast, vast majority of refugees" want to stay in Europe.

Despite these claims, reports have emerged of Ukrainians wanting to join family members already living in the US - but being refused entry by US officials.

Prior to the announcement that 100,000 refugees would be welcomed into the US, The Independent spoke to an immigration law expert about the various ways the US can support ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. Here's how:

Reunite Ukrainians with relatives in the US

With around 350,000 Ukrainian immigrants currently live in the US, according to US Census estimates, for some ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** their closest family members and support networks are based in America.

Maryna Seifi, a Ukrainian-American living in California, told CBS that she flew to Poland to meet her two teenage relatives, 19 and 16, as they escaped from Odesa and crossed the Ukrainian border.

She said that they all reunited in PrzemyÅl and went to the US Embassy where they were told that the two teens were not allowed to fly to the US.

"They have no sympathy, no understanding. Even when I say I'm an American citizen that wants to take my kids," she said.

The US State Department currently has no exceptions for Ukrainians wanting to join their family members in America, with Ukrainians only being considered for US resettlement if the countries they have fled to are deemed to be unsafe. As Poland is not, families like Ms Seifi's are unable to stay together.

Greg Siskind, an immigration lawyer and founder of Siskind Susser Immigration Lawyers, told The Independent that it has been "extremely frustrating" for US citizens and permanent residents who are trying to bring their Ukrainian relatives to their homes in America.

"There has been no communication from the State Department and no accommodations for them," he said.

"All the US has said is that Ukrainians are now stateless so they can be processed in other consulates."

Ukrainians would need to get a visa appointment at the consulate and, at the moment, there are backlogs for many months.

"The big problem is the consular system is so broken that most still haven't resumed routine operations after Covid," he said.

While details are scarce, Mr Biden's plans to support refugees are now expected to include a focus on reuniting people with family members in the US.

Set up a special parole program

President Biden has the power to provide an instant solution to this problem by setting up a special parole program that would allow ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** with close family members in the US to enter the country on a temporary basis, Mr Siskind told The Independent.

"It would be an aggressive use of section 212D - parole authority to the president - where the president has the authority to let anyone into the US without a visa for urgent humanitarian or public policy reasons," he said.

"Biden can do that himself immediately. He could announce that today just for family members."

Mr Siskind said that such a move would fit with the US's immigration policies around family reunification.

"A key part of US immigration policy is to reunite immigrant families," he said.

"So there is no need to even prove a humanitarian aspect -it would be a super easy, fast application process as they would only have to demonstrate that they have close family members in the US."

Port parole

An even quicker way to welcome Ukrainians into the US would be through port parole.

This would reduce the influx of applications - and therefore the lengthy delays in waiting for a visa appointment - by allowing refugees to skip that step and board an evacuation flight to the US.

Once at a US airport, or another port of entry, Customs Border and Protection (CBP) officers would then make a determination on the spot whether to grant access.

For Ukrainians with family members already in the US, Mr Siskind said that this could be a question of airport officers simply checking their documents for evidence of their relationships to their family members.

Extend Temporary Protected Status

In early March, the Biden administration announced it was granting Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to Ukrainians fleeing from the war.

Under the move, Ukrainians without legal documentation can stay and work legally in the US for 18 months.

Around 75,000 people will be shielded from deportation back to the war zone because of this rule so long as they apply by 28 August.

However, TPS only applies to Ukrainians who were already in the US by 1 March, denying access to the more than one million mostly women and children who have evacuated from the country since then and the thousands that continue to cross the Ukrainian border each day.

This is somewhat opposite to the support from the European Commission which has granted a Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) to Ukrainians, allowing them to stay and work in EU countries if they left the country from 24 February onwards.

People on TPS also can't necessarily convert their status into US citizenship or permanent residency.

After the 18-month period, the US can extend the TPS for longer and has done so for many countries.

For now though, the president could also redesignate TPS eligibility to change the date so that it applies to ââUkrainian nationals arriving into the US after 1 March.

Other than the TPS, the only action taken by the US to make it easier for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to enter the country has been the launch of a "trying to be nice memo" from the USCIS, said Mr Siskind, such as forgiving things like missing deadlines on application processes.

Reviving the Lautenberg program

One thing that could also have an immediate impact would be to allow Ukrainians who have applied under the Lautenberg program to travel to America while their applications are still processing.

The Lautenberg Program allows members of certain religious minority groups such as Jews and Evangelical Christians from the former Soviet Union to apply to be reunited with family members already in the US.

Mr Siskind said the program was initially set up to enable around a million people to move out of the former Soviet Union countries, with notable immigrants who moved to the US through the programme including Google cofounder Sergey Brin.

While it still exists today, it is rarely used.

"Reviving the program could make a difference," said Mr Siskind.

"It could be a way for people who are Jewish and of other religions to come to the US."

Welcome Ukrainians working for US employees overseas

Mr Siskind said he had heard of several US tech companies who either directly or indirectly employed staff in Ukraine seeking ways to get these team members into America where they can continue with their work for the company.

The Ukrainian mother who was killed alongside her two children while trying to escape from Irpin into Kyiv this week was identified as a Silicon Valley employee.

Tatiana Perebeinis, her son Nikita and daughter Alise were targeted by a Russian mortar blast as they tried to dash across a bridge.

A photo showing the bodies of the family members lying in the road sent shockwaves around the world and has become one of the most harrowing images of Russia's aggression on innocent civilians.

Ms Perebeinis worked for Silicon Valley tech startup SE Ranking as its chief accountant.

"US employers have been trying to figure out how they can get people like them to the US where they can continue to work," said Mr Siskind.

"The president can also use a parole program to admit people to the US to continue with their employment focusing on the public policy around labour shortage and helping US companies that are losing critical workers."

In the short-term, not only does this help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** flee from the war zone.

But it can also help the US in the midst of its labour shortage and, in the long-term, it could pave the way for permanent residency for Ukrainian workers in the US.

Increase the cap on refugees

The Biden administration set the cap for the number of refugees the US would accept in the 2022 budget year to 125,000 - not including the 76,000 Afghan refugees who arrived following the country's withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan.

This is far higher than the record low of 15,000 set under Donald Trump, and it is likely that the 100,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to be welcomed into the US will not be included in the 125,000.

However, the US can increase the cap further to support its European allies in welcoming in some of the more than 3.6 million Ukrainians who have left their country.

Open up the ESTA to Ukrainians

Non-US citizens travelling to the US typically must first get a visa or travel authorisation.

One of the quickest, simplest ways to get authorisation to travel is to apply for an ESTA with Customs Border and Protection (CBP).

The process is automated, typically takes just 72 hours to approve and costs $14 so an increase in applicants from Ukraine should not result in lengthy delays.

However, Ukraine is not on the list of countries on this Visa Waiver Program because the visa denial rate for Ukrainians is far higher than the 3 per cent cutoff to be added to the list.

To get around this, the Biden administration could open up the ESTA to Ukrainians.

Create a special refugee program for Ukrainians

The Biden administration can also create a refugee program for Ukrainians evacuating the country.

However, Mr Siskind said that setting up a refugee program is a "big endeavour" that would take time to set up.

It is also more difficult to be granted asylum or refugee status, as this requires people proving that they are facing persecution, he said.

"Not just that a place is generally dangerous but that you are singled out by a group," he said.

Supporting Russian refugees

As well as providing better support for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, calls are growing for the US to also support refugees fleeing Russia.

Journalists from independent news outlets have fled the country as President Vladimir Putin cracks down on media freedom.

Some experts have suggested that Russian soldiers - many of whom reportedly didn't know they were being sent into combat and had been told Ukrainians would welcome them - could also be looking for a chance to defect and gain asylum overseas.

"Don't assume Russian soldiers and officers like what they are doing," tweeted Duke University economist Timur Kuran.

"Some - we can't know many, because preference falsification is inherently invisible - must be willing to break ranks, if only they have options. Let EU and NATO countries offer asylum to Russian military defectors."

Mr Siskind said that a program to fast track refugee status for defecting soldiers would be popular with the US public and Ukrainians -as it would "hurt" the Russian military amid its assault on Ukraine.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*First Ukrainian refugees arrive in 'very beautiful' Oxfordshire village*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:655W-S0H1-JBNF-W2R9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 8, 2022 Friday 5:06 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 441 words

**Byline:** Max McLean

**Highlight:** The village of North Moreton has prepared homes for 45 refugees.

**Body**

The first ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to arrive in a village in [*Oxfordshire*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/oxfordshire) have said their UK hosts "don't feel like strangers at all, more like family".

The village of North Moreton - which is home to around 350 people - has prepared homes for 45 refugees fleeing the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The project is being co-ordinated by experienced fundraiser Polly Vacher, 78, with the help of sponsors from 16 local households.

Irina Kryvoviaz, 39, her son Sasha Kryvoviaz, eight, and her godson Yaroslav Kryvoshyia, 17, arrived in the UK on April 7 having left their home of Cherkasy in Ukraine.

They are being hosted by Sarah Allen-Stevens, 55, and her husband Steven Rudge at their home - Mr Kryvoshyia will have his own room, while Ms Kryvoviaz and Sasha will stay in another.

"She's very moved by the fact that Sarah and Steve were able to give us an opportunity to live here," Mr Kryvoshyia, translating for Ms Kryvoviaz, told the PA news agency.

"They don't feel like strangers at all, more like family. She's very grateful for their help."

"It's great for Ukrainian people to come here and feel safe," Ms Kryvoviaz said, before adding of the conflict: "I cant imagine how this could happen in 21st century."

Ms Kryvoviaz has had to leave family, such as her husband, behind, while Mr Kryvoshyia's mother, father and brother remain in Ukraine.

"I worry about them every minute, I think about them, how they are," said Ms Kryvoviaz.

"I slept this night maybe five hours because I woke up and I couldn't sleep because I have so many thoughts in my head."

Mr Kryvoshyia added: "My mother doesn't want to move out yet, she said only if their situation will get worse.

"(She) decided that I should move out to some other country, I didn't really want to. I wanted to help her."

Ms Allen-Stevens said that when she and her husband saw the news in Ukraine, they were moved to do something, adding "we couldn't sit back knowing that we had the space".

She added: "I have to say that when these guys moved from where they were to start travelling I must have been like a neurotic mother.

"You form an emotional attachment very quickly with your guests.

"I'm just so glad that they're here and they're safe and we can start working on the next steps."

The village hopes to host dozens of refugees so those arriving can have their own community of Ukrainians to communicate with.

Mr Kryvoshyia said he and his family were "really happy" in their new home.

"When I arrived everything felt different," he said.

"The whole village seems very beautiful and you can see that it has some history.

"As you can see there are a lot of Ukrainian flags on other buildings so it's really nice."

**Load-Date:** April 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Photography project ‘form of therapy’ for female Ukrainian refugees in Liverpool*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:686X-F561-DY4H-K24K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 12, 2023 Friday 6:00 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 750 words

**Byline:** Aisling Grace

**Highlight:** The photography exhibition is on display in Liverpool while the city hosts the Eurovision Song Contest in place of last year’s winner, Ukraine.

**Body**

An exhibition showing 24 portraits of Ukrainian women who fled the war and resettled in [*Liverpool*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liverpool) has gone on display in the city during the Eurovision Song Contest, and was described as being like a “form of therapy” for those photographed.

Photographer Ean Flanders, 58, told the PA news agency that he was inspired to undertake the project after meeting two Ukrainian women who were living with his friends after being forced to flee their country.

The portraits, showing the Ukrainian women standing or sitting against a dark grey studio background, are on display at Baltic Creative in Liverpool and are accompanied by testimonies written by the women in Ukrainian and translated into English.

From being awoken in the early hours by a panicked phone call informing them of the invasion, to grappling with pregnancy and separating from their husbands in the months after arriving in the UK, the testimonies tell the women’s heart-breaking and inspiring stories.

Mr Flanders said he wanted the portraits to give the general public in Liverpool “more of an in-depth understanding” of the hardship faced by the female ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** living in the city, as well as showcase the women’s strength.

The Liverpool-based professional photographer, originally from [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london) , said: “All these women are going through some form of trauma due to the war, due to not being with their families, due to not being able to speak English, so I just wanted to show their feelings, their emotions, their anger.”

He added: “Not all of us have contact with Ukrainians who are in the city so I thought having this exhibition with these women’s portraits on the wall would give an opportunity for some of these women’s experiences to be shared.”

Among the subjects of the exhibition is Olena Malenk, 37, who fled [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) with her two sons Platon, seven, and Lev, five, after seeing military aircraft soar over the capital and drop missiles on her city.

Forced to flee without her husband, Gregory, as most men of fighting age are not permitted to leave the country, Ms Malenk discovered upon arrival in Liverpool that she was pregnant with twins.

Wearing a long black dress and standing against a grey studio background, Ms Malenk’s photograph shows the mother looking down as she holds her bump.

The photoshoot allowed her to recognise her “power and confidence” as a pregnant woman who has sought to protect her children from war and create a new life, according to a testimony she composed for the exhibition.

Mr Flanders was inspired to undertake the project by Ukrainian women, Olha Kruglova, 40, and Anastasiya Sydorenko, 33, who were being hosted by his friends in Liverpool and who he ultimately collaborated with to bring the exhibition to life.

“They were telling me about the difficulties they had in adjusting and adapting to UK life and the Liverpool accent,” Mr Flanders said, which prompted him to take their photographs and find more Ukrainian women for an exhibition.

Ms Sydorenko was informed that [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) had invaded her country by the trembling voice of her sister, Nastya, over the phone at around 5am on February 24 2022, and several minutes later she heard the wail of an air alert siren.

Ms Sydorenko, her husband and their daughter stayed in the basement of her father’s home for 10 days, until missiles fell on the neighbourhood and made the walls of the house shake as their daughter slept on a sack of potatoes.

“She didn’t deserve such a childhood, to hear these sounds, to fear, to cry, to wake up at night and run to hide not understanding what was going on,” Ms Sydorenko wrote in her testimony.

After arriving in Liverpool, Ms Sydorenko learned that her husband had left her and she fell into a “deep depression” for a period, before slowly pulling herself out of the depths of despair.

She wrote: “I am proud of myself that I didn’t give up and I didn’t let this situation take over me. Everything that was meant to destroy me became my power.”

An unexpected outcome of the project was that it felt like a “form of therapy” for the women photographed, as it allowed them the opportunity to discuss their experience, Mr Flanders said.

He said: “I didn’t think about it at the time, but many of the women have told me that taking part in this project is one of the best things that they’ve done because it’s allowed them to look at themselves and talk about their experiences openly, and to feel some sort of self-worth and strength.

“There’s so many things that I didn’t think the project would bring out.”

**Load-Date:** May 12, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Labour refuses to back open door policy for Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WS-1C01-JBNF-W3K0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 1, 2022 Tuesday 11:25 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 688 words

**Byline:** Jon Stone

**Highlight:** Nearly 40 Tory MPs have called for Britain to follow the EU's lead

**Body**

[*Labour*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/labour) has refused to back calls for an open door policy for ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) , after nearly 40 Tory MPs said the UK should adopt one.

Speaking on Monday evening the opposition party's international development spokesperson was asked about demand but would only say the process for applying to come to the UK should be "simplified".

Preet Kaur Gill said the UK's visa website needed to be improved and that "only those people that have family members in the United Kingdom" wanted to come to Britain.

Jeremy Hunt, one of the 37 Tory MPs calling for Britain to follow the EU's lead on refugees from the conflict, told the BBC's Newsnight programme that Britain had a "long tradition" of helping refugees.

Asked whether he supported an "open door" policy for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** mirroring the one adopted by the European Union, senior Conservative MP Jeremy Hunt said: "Yes. And I expect we will get something like that from the next couple of days from the prime minister.

"Remember, he has a track record of being very generous in his offer to people wanting to leave Hong Kong. And I know that Britain has this long tradition of being open to genuine refugees as obviously people fleeing [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) are."

But asked on the same programme whether Labour also wanted an "open door" policy, Labour frontbencher Preet Kaur Gill said:

"Well, look, we need a very simplified process.

"What was really clear from the House of Commons today earlier, it was a question that Yvette Cooper put to the Home Secretary was given the current scheme does it actually expand to elderly parents, for example, and she indicated that it did.

"Of course, Yvette had to make a point of order and correct her because that is not the case.

"At the moment, unless you're a partner, or you have dependents or someone to care for this scheme does not apply to you.

"Our process is so difficult. Just imagine when you go onto the website, how difficult it is to navigate, and all people need from Ukraine is to know that they're going to be able to join their loved ones.

"Many of these people are women and children. Of course, their partners are left behind. Many of the people fleeing Ukraine will want to stay in neighbouring countries.

"So only those people that have family members in the United Kingdom, they want to be able to come and join them, and we've got to enable a process that is simple that enables them to do that."

Pushed again on whether Labour supported an open door policy specifically, as endorsed by the Tory MPs and implemented by the EU, she said:

"What we're saying is we need a simplified scheme. We've already got one of the Hong Kong one it's working really well. We need to have something very similar to that."

The government's visa concessions for Ukrainians announced over the weekend have beenwidely criticised by campaigners as insufficient - with many close family members including adult children, parents of adults, brothers and sisters not covered under the scheme.

The Independent last week launched its [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) campaign, calling on the government to set up a resettlement scheme to grant sanctuary in the UK to Ukrainians fleeing the bloody conflict. Polls suggest a strong backing for the move.

Andrew Scattergood, co-chair of left-wing pressure group Momentum, said Labour should change its policy and bring it into line with EU states.

"The Labour leadership must urgently change position and fully commit to safe passage for every Ukrainian refugee who needs it, as the EU has done," he said.

"Even Tory MPs are recognising an open door policy is the bare minimum we should be demanding for Ukrainians."

The EU has said it will allow entry to all people fleeing Russia's invasion of Ukraine and will not require them to apply for asylum, under its Temporary Protection Directive scheme.

EU Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson said she did not know how many people would come, adding: "I think we will have to prepare for millions."

Various estimates by the UN and refugee organisations put the number of people fleeing the Russian invasion at somewhere between four and seven million people.

**Load-Date:** March 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Biden calls Putin 'a butcher' as he visits Ukrainian refugees in Poland*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6534-3T91-DY4H-K17B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 26, 2022 Saturday 4:01 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:5

**Length:** 291 words

**Byline:** Andrew Feinberg

**Highlight:** US president is on a trip to Europe to drum up support for Ukraine as it fights off Russian invasion

**Body**

US President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) on Saturday delivered a harsh verdict on Russia' s president, whose unprovoked war forced millions of Ukrainians from their homes, after meeting with [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) who he said were from the besieged city of Mariupol.

Asked what meeting the ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** made him think of what [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) had done to them, Mr Biden replied: "He's a butcher".

Mr Biden's encounter with refugees took place at PGE Narodowy Stadium in Warsaw, which has been converted into a massive reception center and shelter for many of the Ukrainians who have fled over the Polish border in the month since Putin launched his invasion of their country.

Mr Biden told one refugee family the US would be sending more Javelin anti-tank missiles and other weapons to help Ukrainian forces drive out the invaders.

One of the refugees told him they were from Mariupol, which they said was being "erased from the face of the earth" by Russian forces.

The refugee, a mother, said she was in Poland with her young daughter while her husband and son were fighting in [*Ukraine.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine)

"We're just afraid he's going to keep moving," she said of Mr Putin. "We Ukrainian mothers are ready to strangle him with our bare hands if we only knew where he was hiding".

Mr Biden then picked up the refugee's young daughter, who, through a translator, told him she had been "stuck in the basement" in Mariupol "for the longest time".

He told the young girl she was "brave, brave, brave".

"I've been to a lot of awful places like this, a lot of refugee camps in my life, and what I'm always surprised by is the depth and strength to the human spirit," Mr Biden said.

"I mean it sincerely - it's incredible. See all those little children? They just want a hug, just want to say 'thanks'".

**Load-Date:** March 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Visa processing delays leaving Ukrainian refugees 'in limbo'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6593-9641-DY4H-K080-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 23, 2022 Saturday 5:02 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 549 words

**Byline:** Ted Hennessey

**Highlight:** A vigil took place outside the Home Office in central London on Saturday afternoon.

**Body**

[*Britons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britons) wishing to host ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in their homes say people have been left "in limbo" because of delays processing visas.

[*Families*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/families) looking to sponsor Ukrainian families under the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine scheme have experienced delays because family members' visas are coming through at different times, with others not getting them at all.

A vigil took place outside the [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) in central [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london) on Saturday afternoon, with attendees telling of their frustrations over a lack of information from the Government.

Among those attending were Vladymir Tymashov, 35, and his wife Katryna, originally from Dnipro in eastern Ukraine, now living in Wimbledon, south-west London, who are trying to host a young mother and her two young children.

The couple, who themselves have two children, told the PA news agency they applied for the scheme in March, but the family has been halted because the youngest child's visa has been delayed.

Mr Tymashov said: "The frustrating part is the mother and the eldest child received their visas and the younger child still has no feedback.

"It's frustrating, it makes us feel uncertain that we did everything right, we tried to call the Home Office but they're just saying they're trying.

"The family hoped for a quicker outcome so they are a little bit concerned and unclear about their future, they're in Poland at the moment and are waiting to come here.

"I would love the Government to speed up, maybe they need to get rid of the checks for the younger kids, some of them are a bit ridiculous."

Government figures released this week show that around 71,800 visas have been issued to Ukrainians under the Family and Sponsorship schemes, but less than a third have arrived in the UK.

The vigil saw dozens of people, would-be sponsors and supporters, holding banners calling for the Government to speed up delays and improve the application process.

The group intends to maintain a presence outside the Home Office every day between 2-4pm until the delays are resolved.

Another, named Lucy Wells, 34, from Blandford, in Dorset, said her family applied on March 23 to sponsor two mothers and four children, aged 15 to three, from Kyiv.

She said: "I'm here today because it's been a really frustrating process and we're still waiting on visas but have been met by so many obstacles along the way.

"One of the most shocking things that we found out is on Monday we finally got an email from someone at the Home Office, who told us that the visas had been issued.

"We've only received two visa emails, so we were waiting on notification of four visas."

The refugees, have been in accommodation in Germany for a month, Ms Wells said.

She added: "It's really like they've been stuck in limbo, they're trying to adapt to something that's completely abnormal.

"They're really struggling financially and it's really difficult for them-it's really frustrating and upsetting.

"We really want to work with the family but we're getting no answers, every day feels like a second job."

A Government spokesman said: "The changes the Home Office has made to streamline the visa system, including simplifying the forms and boosting staff numbers, are working and we are now processing visas as quickly as they come in - enabling thousands more Ukrainians to come through our uncapped routes."

**Load-Date:** April 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[*The sponsorship scheme to help Ukrainian refugees is a serious commitment*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6502-G7M1-JCS0-D4BW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 12, 2022 Saturday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 2

**Length:** 646 words

**Byline:** EDITORIAL

**Body**

After chaos comes innovation, of sorts. Ever since the Russians invaded Ukraine - an eventuality the intelligence services were warning about for weeks in advance - ministers have found themselves scrambling to devise suitable ways of getting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** safely to Britain (or not, all too often) and playing catch-up with the remarkable wave of public sympathy for the plight of the Ukrainian people.

As home secretary for a party that has spent more than a decade creating hostile environments and erecting bureaucratic obstacles to offering shelter to those in need, suddenly Priti Patel has had to contort her usual scowls and smirks into a warm, beaming face of welcome. Or rather, she will have to bite her lip while Michael Gove, who has been given responsibility for this part of Ms Patel's usual brief, gets on with delivering it.

Even now, after some hasty U-turns, the schemes are not yet in place, and once they are they may prove inadequate to the challenge, just as in the past. But one, the sponsorship scheme, looks to be one of the most radical social experiments tried by any government since the end of the Second World War.

Charities, businesses and community groups will be able to volunteer to help house and feed refugees, and find them useful work. For the first time, private British citizens will be able to officially "sponsor" a complete stranger to come and share their home, apparently for a period of at least six months.

To give the government credit, the usual counterproductive restrictions on asylum seekers are being lifted (begging the question of what makes the Ukrainians so special). Once in Britain, the ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** will be permitted to work (for pay) as well as being eligible for social security and NHS care. It is a better offer.

There are some obvious questions, though. How, for example, will Mr Gove's Department for Levelling Up organise this new matchmaking function, allocating refugees to different households? Who's going to do the promised vetting, on both sides? How will they police the conditions the refugees will be housed in? What is there in place to prevent economic exploitation, and worse, of these vulnerable people, who will be predominantly women and children? What happens if things go wrong? After the six months is up, then what? Is there to be a route to permanent settlement?

Ministers - as well as those individuals and families confident enough to participate in the scheme - need to have some workable ground rules and sources of advice and help. The Ukrainians have fled a war zone, left partners and families behind, may not speak good English, and will have been traumatised. It will not simply be a matter of showing them where the spare room is.

There is also the danger that the sponsorship scheme will feel a touch condescending. Worse still, it may provide a new battleground in Britain's unending culture wars, with every liberal celebrity and opposition politician asked about precisely how many Ukrainians they will be allowing to live in their big houses, with the depressingly predictable charge of "hypocrisy" not far behind. Elements of the press will no doubt pursue those refugees sharing the Starmer or Cooper-Balls households to find out how things are going. And some places, sadly, will be hostile to the newcomers.

For a government with little inclination to devote resources to caring for refugees, or to spend money on putting them up in hotels or hostels, the notion of tapping up the public's generosity for a low-cost solution at the same time as being seen to "do the right thing" must be very tempting. It is, though, the privatisation of compassion - and it wrongly limits the extent of the unqualified, and unlimited, legal and moral obligation to offer assistance to those seeking asylum. Whatever else, it is not a long-term solution to the challenge Europe faces.

**Load-Date:** March 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Sponsor route for Ukrainian refugees criticised for being 'too slow and cumbersome'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650G-PTG1-JCS0-D077-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 14, 2022 Monday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 5

**Length:** 821 words

**Byline:** ADAM FORREST

**Body**

Refugee charities said the government's new sponsorship route for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** falls short of the response required, as fears grow that it will be too "slow and cumbersome" to meet the scale of the crisis.

Cabinet minister Michael Gove said he hoped "tens of thousands" would be able to use the route set to be opened up this week, as he announced that local authority areas would get £10,000 per Ukrainian refugee sponsored in their area. The minister for levelling up said he hoped individuals and community groups would be able to "match" with refugees using social media, adding that charities would help in the process.

But opposition parties said the scheme - which will also provide £350 per month to Britons who provide homes to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** - placed too much of the burden on the public and community groups. Labour cautioned that "too many questions remain unanswered" about the new scheme - and ridiculed its reliance on social media. Shadow levelling up minister Lisa Nandy told LBC: "We're asking people to ask to take to social media at a time they're fleeing a war zone. This is a serious crisis - it's not an online dating situation."

Labour leader Sir KeirStarmerclaimed the government's handling of refugees fleeing Ukraine was "far tooslow, fartoomean" and had been "an embarrassment for the United Kingdom". Questioning the lack of detail in the sponsorship plan, Sir Keir told Sky News: "What would comfort me more frankly is if I heard from Michael Gove that there were plans in place for the support that's actually going to be needed on arrival."

The Refugee Council said ministers were still putting too many "bureaucratic hurdles" in the way of those in danger. Chief executive Enver Solomon said the new scheme "falls short" of what is needed and would "inevitably be restricted to those who are known to people in the UK". Louise Calvey of Refugee Action said the government were "tinkering at the margins" and had not set out a "well resourced" programme that deals with the scale of the refugee crisis now enveloping Europe.

Mr Gove told Sky News the public could register interest in housing a refugee on a newly launched website, and said he expects the first refugees making use of the route to come to the UK "in a week's time". Asked how sponsors and refugees were supposed the find each other, the minister told Sky News'Sophy Ridge on Sunday that the government believed they could try to form links on Instagram or Twitter. "We know charities, and we are working with them, who are working to identify people on the ground, and helping to identify people here to create the matching process," he added.

Sponsors will be expected to guarantee a minimum stay of six months - but will be encouraged to keep up the offer for as long as they can. Both those offering accommodation and Ukrainian applicants will undergo security checks. Sponsored refugees will be granted 36 months leave to remain in the UK, and will be entitled to work, benefits and public services. Councillor James Jamieson, chairman of the Local Government Association, said councils "will be central in helping families settle into their communities". He called on Mr Gove's department to work closely with local leaders so the scheme "can move at pace and scale".

First minister and SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon said yesterday that Scotland "stands ready" to take 3,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** immediately as a "super sponsor". But Ms Sturgeon said she was worried the UK sponsorship scheme would be too "slow and cumbersome", and may not be sustainable for the length of time that people may need to stay in the UK.

When Asked on BBC'sSunday Morningprogramme if Mr Gove would take someone in, he said: "I'm exploring what I can do, I know that there are others who have. Without going into my personal circumstances, there are a couple of things I need to sort out - but yes." Mr Gove said yesterday that "more than 3,000 visas" have now been issued to those fleeing the war with family in the UK, as the government came in for more criticism over its failure to follow the EU approach and waive visa requirements.

Liberal Democrat leader Sir Ed Davey said it was time for Boris Johnson to sack home secretary PritiPatelover her department's handling of the Ukrainian refugee crisis. "Her inaction does not befit the British people, with all our compassion and generosity," he told his party's spring conference. "It couldn't be clearer that PritiPatelis not up to the job. The buck stops with the prime minister. So Boris Johnson must sack her, now."

Ireland's premier Micheal Martin said his country's humanitarian response trumps security checks on arriving Ukrainians. "Our primary impulse is to assist those fleeing war," he told the BBC. The Taoiseach has said the state has so far accepted 5,500 people fleeing the Russian invasion, a response to what he termed "the worst displacement of people since World War Two".

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Juliet Stevenson 'in tears daily' over courage of Ukrainian refugees in her home*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6528-JVS1-JBNF-W3MV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 22, 2022 Tuesday 6:16 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 1024 words

**Byline:** Jemma Crew

**Highlight:** The actress and her husband have opened up their north London home to a Ukrainian mother and her young daughter.

**Body**

Actress [*Juliet Stevenson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/juliet-stevenson) has said she is moved to tears daily by the courage of the ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** she has welcomed into her home, as she condemned the Government's "extremely harsh and cruel" immigration [*Bill*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bill).

Stevenson and her husband have offered one of their adult children's bedrooms to a Ukrainian mother and her six-year-old daughter, who moved in last week.

The Nationality and Borders Bill being debated in [*Commons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/commons) is out of step with the generosity that more than 150,000 members of the public have shown in wishing to offer refuge to Ukrainian families forced to flee the conflict, she said.

There's hundreds of thousands of people offering refuge in our own homes to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, and this Bill seeks to really criminalise the whole process of seeking asylum

Juliet Stevenson

She told the PA news agency: "I think it is a Bill that entirely lacks compassion or justice and fairness, and I think it's not at all in step with what the British people are feeling at the moment.

"There's been this amazing outpouring of agonised concern about what people are going through in Ukraine, and people in this country have opened up their hearts and their homes, there's hundreds of thousands of people offering refuge in our own homes to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, and this Bill seeks to really criminalise the whole process of seeking asylum."

Stevenson, 65, is backing changes to the Bill called for by Together With Refugees, a coalition of almost 500 national and local charities across the UK.

It wants the UK to commit to resettle at least 10,000 refugees from around the world every year, and to scrap a clause which would punish refugees who have not arrived in the country through official routes.

It also wants to see immediate measures to enable ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to get to the country safely without having to apply for visas first.

And just when we couldn't imagine having any more amazing videos to share, we receive this one from our friends at [*@SWVGAction*](https://twitter.com/SWVGAction?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) ! It's an emotive campaign video asking MPs to vote the right way on the [*#BordersBill*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/BordersBill?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) today. Please share and tag your MPs. [*#TogetherWithRefugees*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TogetherWithRefugees?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/n9fDFZNtC6*](https://t.co/n9fDFZNtC6) - Together With Refugees (@RefugeeTogether) [*March 22, 2022*](https://twitter.com/RefugeeTogether/status/1506233093614669824?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Stevenson continued: "What we have to remember is that it is a legal right in international law to seek asylum."We've seen nightly, every day on our screens, what the people of Ukraine, for example, are enduring, their homes being bombed, their schools, their hospitals - it's unthinkable."Well, that's also going on in other places in the world, which we don't see so often on our screen. So I think that this Bill is extremely harsh and cruel."Stevenson was put in touch with the Ukrainians she has taken in through a friend who runs a theatre company in Belarus.The mother and daughter arrived on a tourist visa several weeks ago and are applying for visas under the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme, which opened on Friday.She has spent the last few days showing them around the local area so they know about the nearest doctor's surgery, the library, charity shops, parks, the bus system and how the Tube works.She said her north [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london) neighbours have been fantastic, rallying around the new arrivals and turning up at the door with toys and offering their time.The girl is having remote lessons taught by teachers from her school in [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) , and will be helped with her English by a neighbour's daughter.Stevenson said the six-year-old already "adores" the family dog and has been helping with walks.They want to help and they want to cook and they're just really lovely, lovely people, and they're just like usJuliet StevensonThey "desperately" want to return home to Kyiv, where the husband and father has remained to fight, Stevenson said.She added: "Every time she (the mother) checks her phone, she's checking to see whether he's alive."I check my phone to see if I've got a new email, or how many likes I've got on Instagram."She considers herself "lucky" to have them in her home, and said the rooms will be available for "as long as they need them".She added: "They make me cry every day because they're so courageous, and they want to help and they want to cook and they're just really lovely, lovely people, and they're just like us."I just think, oh my god, you know, what would it be like, it could so easily be the other way around."Stevenson said the Bill and the complicated visa process for Ukrainians "threatens" the UK's reputation on the international stage.She said: "Just get people out of danger. Let them come here... then we can do the paperwork and the bureaucracy, but to make them go through all this while they're trying to flee from danger, or they're living in very, very difficult conditions in 'nowhere land', as it were, on the move, it's so cruel, it's so brutal."And I don't believe that's the national identity, I don't think that's who we are. I think we're a decent, more decent lot, and I think that it matters to people to feel they can hold their heads up in the international community and say, 'Yeah, we did our bit'."Olivia Colman calls on MPs to vote the right way on the [*#BordersBill*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/BordersBill?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) today. [*#TogetherWithRefugees*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TogetherWithRefugees?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). Please share & tag your MP. [*pic.twitter.com/0aooZFtQ26*](https://t.co/0aooZFtQ26) - Together With Refugees (@RefugeeTogether) [*March 22, 2022*](https://twitter.com/RefugeeTogether/status/1506201692789956615?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Fellow actress Olivia Colman also spoke out, saying she "desperately hopes" people email their MP voicing their opposition to the Bill.

She said: "I don't want to be part of a country where our Government treats people with such cruelty.

"Going ahead with the proposals in this Bill would bring such shame on the UK and we must all do what we can to stop it.

"As we all watch what is happening to Ukrainians now, it is clearer than ever that we must treat refugees with compassion."

Enver Solomon, chief executive of the Refugee Council, said the Bill "would harm thousands of people who come to this country desperately needing safety - including those fleeing bombing and shelling in Ukraine this very minute".

He added: "The public clearly want to see refugees treated with decency and fairness, not criminalised, ignored or driven away."

**Load-Date:** March 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Veteran’s ‘Buddy Box’ learning tool brings big smiles to Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65YB-27J1-JBNF-W28J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 18, 2022 Monday 12:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 686 words

**Byline:** Danielle Desouza

**Highlight:** Buddy Box originally started off as a cardboard box and then became a virtual, cloud-based learning tool.

**Body**

A [*British Armed Forces*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british-armed-forces) veteran’s educational resource has helped break down language barriers for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in schools across the UK, leaving them with “big smiles”.

Called “Buddy Box”, the resource makes use of text, pictures and audio to translate languages including [*Arabic*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/arabic) , [*Afghan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/afghan) Dari and Pashto, and recently Ukrainian, to [*English*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/english) , and vice versa and was created by Veteran and entrepreneur Mark Hill, 52, from Catterick Garrison in North Yorkshire.

“The feedback has been amazing. [*Teachers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/teachers) have said to watch the young people’s expressions when they hear their own language in the classroom has been remarkable,” Mr Hill told the PA news agency about the impact Buddy Box is having on ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

“They hear their own language and it’s big smiles, Buddy Box keeps breaking down language and communication barriers.”

Welcome to [*#UkrainianBuddyBox*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/UkrainianBuddyBox?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) A free school resource, covering the alphabet, numbers, colours, shapes, days of the week, months of the year, fruit & vegetables, telling the time & more.Cloud-based with AI technology, text, audio & pictures.E: [*UkrainianBuddyBox@mail.com*](mailto:UkrainianBuddyBox@mail.com) [*pic.twitter.com/wTFhlUmr9s*](https://t.co/wTFhlUmr9s) — Mark Hill MBE ESCM (Mil) (@MarkHillMBE) [*June 26, 2022*](https://twitter.com/MarkHillMBE/status/1541002325074104320?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

The free digital resource was first created in 2018 to support Syrian and Iraqi children.

An Afghan version was made in 2021 and a Ukrainian version following the Russian invasion of the country, with the cloud-based learning tool being available online for anyone to use, through a downloadable link or via an email.

So far, Buddy Box links have been emailed to around 112 schools and local authorities in the UK.

Mr Hill added that one of the best parts about Buddy Box is that it “can be used at home for the whole family to learn from and engage with as a family unit”.

The communication learning tool was also featured in a journal from The National Association for Language Development In the Curriculum – the Professional Association for those working with and for children who are learning English as an Additional Language in the UK – this year.

Mr Hill meanwhile has continued to support girls in Afghanistan at a time which marks just over 300 days since they were banned from attending schools by the Taliban.

Afghan Buddy Box is now in three provinces in Afghanistan, supporting around 100 girls.

Last week, a school shared a photo in which young Afghan girls can be seen holding thank you posters for Mr Hill, which he described as an “amazing achievement”.

He said: “I believe education is a human right and everyone, regardless of where they’re from around the world, should have access to an education.

“I have put a lot of work into Buddy Box – a lot of hours with support from my Afghan friend and translator Mehdi Nazari who has supported with Dari and Pashto text and audio.

“Mehdi is our link into supporting girls in Afghanistan. This project is something we are both passionate about. It’s inspiring to receive feedback from teachers saying how Buddy Box is making a huge difference. It has made all the hard work worth it.”

Mr Hill said he has a “vision” to take Buddy Box “around the world” to Africa and across the Indian subcontinent.

He is in talks with the Refugee Council about getting the resource listed on the Government website.

So, from the Government to local authorities to educational establishments and other governing bodies who are tasked with looking after refugee young people -it's going across the board, Buddy Box is going well so far.

Mark Hill

“From the Government to local authorities to educational establishments and other governing bodies who are tasked with looking after refugee young people, it’s going across the board,” he added.

Subjects such as the alphabet, numbers, colours, shapes, telling the time, days of the week, months of the year, fruit and vegetables, basic conversations, classroom items and more are covered through Buddy Box.

Mr Hill has launched a GoFundMe to raise enough money to create a website, to make it easier for Buddy Box to help those most in need – to learn more about the project, visit [*https://www.gofundme.com/f/ukrainian-buddy-box*](https://www.gofundme.com/f/ukrainian-buddy-box).

**Load-Date:** July 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Free rail journey offered to Ukrainian refugees who arrive in Britain*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651M-4VX1-JBNF-W4X6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 19, 2022 Saturday 3:20 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 379 words

**Byline:** Helen William

**Highlight:** The Rail Delivery Group says the scheme, aimed at helping Ukrainians reach their final British destinations, will begin on Sunday

**Body**

Train operators have offered free onward travel for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who arrive in Britain.

Rail Delivery Group (RDG) chief executive Jac Starr said the scheme, which is aimed at helping people reach their final [*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) destinations, will begin on Sunday because "as an industry we know this is the right thing to do".

Refugees will have to show a Ukrainian passport and a boarding pass or ticket showing their arrival into the UK in order to get free travel on the national rail network.

Britain's train operators will provide free onward travel for Ukrainian arrivals in the UK. Retweet to spread awareness of the scheme to help those in need [*https://t.co/qCSsdwA4oZ*](https://t.co/qCSsdwA4oZ) [*pic.twitter.com/GsfB3efnxu*](https://t.co/GsfB3efnxu) - Rail Delivery Group (@RailDeliveryGrp) [*March 18, 2022*](https://twitter.com/RailDeliveryGrp/status/1504847509297975296?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

All train operators in Britain are involved, the RDG said, with many bus and coach operators are also offering free onward travel to final destinations.

Ms Starr said: "We have all been shocked by the tragedy unfolding in Ukraine.

"As an industry we know this is the right thing to do, making sure families affected by this tragedy can be reunited as quickly as possible, and helping others get to safety.

"Similar schemes have been launched on the Continent so I am proud that we are standing alongside our European rail family and doing what we can to help."

In order to make use of the scheme, Ukrainian nationals must have arrived in Britain in the past 48 hours.

The initiative will run for three months and then be reviewed, an RDG spokesman said.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine ordered by President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) has led to the fastest-growing refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War, according to the UN's high commissioner for refugees Filippo Grandi.

Millions of people, largely made up of women and children, have fled their homes to try and find safety. [*Men*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/men) of fighting age have remained in Ukraine.

Transport Secretary [*Grant Shapps*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/grant-shapps) said: "We are working tirelessly to help Ukrainians travelling to Britain fleeing conflict.

"It is hugely welcome that the transport industry has come together to offer free rail, tram, bus and coach onward travel from any international port, airport or train station.

"The UK stands with the Ukrainian people and those fleeing Putin's brutal invasion."

**Load-Date:** March 19, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Entrepreneurs create online platform to help Ukrainian refugees find sponsors*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652P-H1F1-DY4H-K07R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 24, 2022 Thursday 6:20 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 448 words

**Byline:** Lottie Kilraine

**Highlight:** Entrepreneurs Max Haining and Glenn McWhinney said their platform will provide a 'digital solution' to aid the Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme.

**Body**

A UK technology company has created a online platform that allows "frustrated" [*Britons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britons) to connect with refugees in a bid to streamline the Government's [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine scheme.

More than 150,000 people across the UK have already expressed interest in offering up their spare rooms to Ukrainian people fleeing from the Russian invasion.

In order to successfully host a refugee through the scheme, sponsors must identify a named person. This has caused many to resort to social media to find potential matches.

[*Entrepreneurs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/entrepreneurs) Max Haining and Glenn McWhinney say their online platform called UK Homes for Ukrainians will provide a "digital solution" to aid the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) scheme.

"We saw the scenes in Ukraine and wanted to create an easier way for fleeing refugees to connect with UK sponsors," Mr Haining told the PA news agency.

Sponsor's signing up to the digital platform will be asked to include details about the rooms they have available, the location and for how long they can accommodate someone.

This will enable refugees in Ukraine to choose a sponsor that fits their requirements.

The entrepreneurs have said they plan to distribute their platform to charity organisations in a bid to speed up the process and aid the Government scheme.

"I'm worried that the longer it takes Brits to find a refugee to sponsor, the window of opportunity for Ukrainians to flee safely to the UK becomes smaller," Mr Haining said.

"Without knowing the name of refugees to sponsor, frustrated British families have resorted to social media to find potential matches.

"By launching this platform, we hope to speed up the process for hosts and refugees to find a 'named person' to sponsor before they can officially apply."

Today [*@TheFlowAgency*](https://twitter.com/TheFlowAgency?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) and I are launching [*@UkrainiansUK*](https://twitter.com/UkrainiansUK?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) , an independent platform connecting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** with UK homeowners. [*https://t.co/Xl6juvo6m8*](https://t.co/Xl6juvo6m8) - Max Haining (@HainingMax) [*March 21, 2022*](https://twitter.com/HainingMax/status/1505968934121574400?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Meanwhile, across Britain many charities are preparing for the influx of refugee families with young children expected to arrive in the UK over the next few months.

Humanitarian charity Sanctuary Foundation, set up in response to the Ukraine conflict, is working alongside Sheffield-based charity Baby Basics to provide essentials and equipment to struggling mothers who have fled the war.

The charities have developed a wish list on [*Amazon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/amazon) and donation website For Common Good, that allows donors to buy products ranging in price from £2 to £300.

The donations include products such as pushchairs, pyjama sets, toys, sanitary products and even SPF sun lotion.

For more information about the UK Homes for Ukrainians platform visit [*https://www.ukhomesforukrainians.com*](https://www.ukhomesforukrainians.com)/

**Load-Date:** March 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'Shameful' delays in processing visas for Ukrainian refugees - Labour*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652X-0CP1-DY4H-K4JB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 25, 2022 Friday 3:35 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:3

**Length:** 547 words

**Byline:** Flora Thompson

**Highlight:** So far the Government has been unable to provide information on how many Ukrainians have arrived in the UK after being granted visas.

**Body**

The [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) has come under fire over its visa schemes for Ukrainians fleeing conflict, amid accusations there are "continuing delays and problems" with the process.

Last week ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who did not have any relatives in the UK but wanted to apply for visas under the new [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine sponsorship scheme were told not to travel to Britain until they have received a decision on their application.

At that time 150,000 [*Britons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britons) had expressed an interest in housing refugees under the scheme.

Meanwhile tens of thousands of applications have been made to the separate Ukraine family scheme, which allows Ukrainians to join relatives living in the UK.

Warm words from ministers about helping Ukrainian families just aren't good enough if their system just isn't working

Shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper

The Government said it was "moving as quickly as possible" to help those fleeing persecution and its approach is "working".

It comes as anti-slavery commissioner Dame Sara Thornton said she is "gravely concerned" about the "very real threat of human trafficking facing refugees - overwhelmingly women and children - at the Ukrainian borders and along their journey to destination countries, including the UK".

Labour's shadow home secretary [*Yvette Cooper*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/yvette-cooper) called on the Government to "urgently publish" more information to show the progress of the visa schemes.

She said: "A month after Putin's invasion began, the continuing delays and problems with the Home Office visa processes for Ukrainian families are just shameful.

"The British people have shown huge generosity in wanting to support Ukrainians fleeing Putin's invasion but the design of this scheme is causing real problems with continuing delays, huge confusion about how to make it work and safeguarding concerns.

"The Government needs to urgently publish how many people have actually managed to arrive.

"Warm words from ministers about helping Ukrainian families just aren't good enough if their system just isn't working."

So far the Government has been unable to provide information on: how many Ukrainians have arrived in the UK after being granted visas; how many applications have been made to the Homes for Ukraine scheme since this opened a week ago and how many visas have been granted as a result; or any further detail on how many sponsors have now registered an interest.

According to the latest provisional data available, the Home Office has issued 20,100 visas under the Ukraine family scheme as of 5pm on Thursday while 35,500 applications have been submitted.

Data on the sponsorship scheme will be published "once they become available", according to the Home Office website.

A Government spokeswoman said: "We are moving as quickly as possible to ensure that those fleeing horrific persecution in Ukraine can find safety in the UK, setting up both the Ukraine Family Scheme and now the Homes for Ukraine scheme which allows those without family connections to come here.

"We have streamlined the visa application process so valid passport holders no longer have to attend in-person appointments before arriving and made changes to our forms to help people through the process as quickly as possible.

The approach is "working" and more applications are being processed every hour, the spokeswoman added.

**Load-Date:** March 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees with passports will be able to apply for UK family visa online in Home Office U-turn*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YN-RTK1-JBNF-W1GT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 10, 2022 Thursday 11:48 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:5

**Length:** 646 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Changes to scheme welcomed but warnings there are 'still major gaps' in the UK's support for Ukrainians

**Body**

[***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) with [*passports*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/passports) will now be able to apply to join their relatives in the UK through an online process, [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) has announced in a Home Office U-turn.

The [*home secretary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-secretary) said that from Tuesday, Ukrainians who have fled the war and have passports will no longer need to go to a visa application centre to submit their [*biometrics*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/biometrics) before they come to the UK.

Ms Patel told the [*House of Commons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/house-of-commons-0) she had received assurances on security matters which enabled her to make changes to the Ukrainian family scheme.

"In short, Ukrainians with passports will be able to get permission to come here fully online from wherever they are and will be able to give their biometrics once in Britain," she said.

"This will mean that visa application centres across Europe can focus their efforts on helping Ukrainians without passports."

The change comes after mounting concerns about "unnecessary delays and bureaucracy" in the visa application process, which has seen many forced to [*wait for hours in the cold*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugees-poland-uk-visa-home-office-b2031118.html) and travel for miles.

The scheme still applies only to Ukrainians with family members who are settled in Britain.

Shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper said: "Why does it always take being hauled into the House of Commons to make basic changes to help vulnerable people who are fleeing from Ukraine?

"It is welcome that she's now introducing the online approach that we know they tried different ways of doing for the Hong Kong visas, but why has it taken so long when she's had intelligence for weeks if not months that she needed to prepare for a Russian invasion of Ukraine?"

She added: "And why have we still got to wait until Tuesday for this new system to come in, what is to happen for everybody else in the meantime?"

Responding, Ms Patel brought up the Windrush scandal, which erupted under the Conservative government in 2018 and saw thousands of people who had lived and worked in Britain for decades wrongly treated as illegal immigrants.

"There was something known as the Windrush scandal, and it's important that everyone arriving in the UK has physical and digital records of their status in the UK to ensure they're accessible to schemes," the home secretary said.

Responding to the visa change, Liberal Democrat home affairs spokesperson Alistair Carmichael said: "It is shameful that the home secretary has to be dragged inch by inch towards a compassionate response to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing Putin's bombs.

"Even after all the appalling images we have seen, Priti Patel is still limiting the scheme to those with close family in the UK, and forcing them to apply for a visa before they come here. That has to change."

Marley Morris, IPPR associate director for migration, trade and communities, said he welcomed the change but that there were "still major gaps" in the UK's support for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

"Currently, there are no available humanitarian routes for Ukrainians without family members in the UK. The humanitarian sponsorship scheme has not yet been set up and, based on the current scale and resourcing of community sponsorship in the UK, it will be wholly inadequate for meeting the needs of Ukrainians," he said.

"The government should follow the lead of Canada and the EU by offering temporary protection to all Ukrainians who want to apply. At the same time, it should urgently investigate how to further streamline the visa process, or simply lift visa requirements altogether."

Andy Hewett, head of advocacy at the Refugee Council, said the announcement did not go "anywhere near far enough".

He added: "Rather than continuing with a system that requires ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to apply for a visa, the government urgently needs to temporarily waive visa requirements so that all Ukrainian families fleeing war and bloodshed can easily reach the UK and access the protection that is their fundamental right under the Refugee Convention."

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Britain is not turning back Ukrainian refugees at the border - Patel*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XW-1BX1-JBNF-W53Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 6, 2022 Sunday 6:06 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 908 words

**Byline:** Geraldine Scott

**Highlight:** Home Secretary Priti Patel defended the UK's offer to those fleeing the conflict in Ukraine.

**Body**

[*Home Secretary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-secretary) [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) has insisted the UK is "doing everything possible" to speed up efforts to grant visas to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** as it was revealed only around 50 have been approved so far.

The [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) said "around 50" visas had been given the green light under the Ukraine Family Scheme as of 10am on Sunday.

Some 5,535 online applications have been completed and submitted online and 2,368 people had booked a visa appointment to submit their application and biometric information, the Government said.

The Home Office said 11,750 people have started, but not completed, an online application.

Ms Patel visited the Ukrainian Social Club in Holland Park, west London, on Sunday afternoon and dropped off a bag of donations including wet wipes, nappies and non-perishable foods before meeting volunteers helping with relief efforts.

Asked by a reporter if it was acceptable that around 1% of submitted applications had been granted in the first 48 hours of the visa scheme, she said: "Let's be clear, this is the first scheme in the world that's up and running in this short period of time.

"Ten thousand applications and yes, grants are happening as we stand here right now and are speaking. So I'm surging staff across all application centres across the entire European Union as well as in the border countries such as [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , where I was the other day and obviously where huge numbers of people are coming through."

She added: "This is an incredible scheme and we are doing everything possible, surging capacity across every single application centre across the EU."

She said staff are being flown into border countries "so we can fast track and speed up applications and it's right that we do this".

The Home Secretary denied accusations from France that refugees had been turned away from the UK at Calais.

French interior minister [*Gerald Darmanin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gerald-darmanin) on Sunday said it was "inhumane" of the UK to turn away refugees arriving at the French port city if they did not have a valid visa.

But Ms Patel said: "Let me just correct what has been said by the French government. The British Government is not turning anybody around or turning anybody back at all.

"And I think it's really important to emphasise that, particularly at this time, when all nations across Europe must work together to help and support people in need and fleeing Ukraine at this awful, awful time."

The Home Secretary said it is "wrong to say that we are turning people back, we are not".

She added: "I have staff in Calais to provide support to Ukrainian families that have left Ukraine to come to the United Kingdom. It is wrong and it is inaccurate to say that we are not providing support on the ground. We are."

Earlier, Mr Darmanin told Europe 1 radio: "I called my British counterpart twice.

"I asked her to set up a consulate in Calais that can process people's paperwork and issue visas."

Hundreds of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Calais have been told by British authorities to obtain a visa at UK consulates in Paris or Brussels, Mr Darmanin said, calling it "a bit inhumane" to expect them to travel all the way there after their long journeys from Ukraine.

"The British must put their rhetoric into action, I've heard the big words of generosity from Mr (Boris) Johnson," Mr Darmanin said.

"I hope this will allow the English to open their arms a little and stop the technocratic nit-picking".

Ukrainian ambassador to the UK Vadym Prystaiko said any "bureaucratic nonsense" around visas should be cleared.

Mr Prystaiko, who met Ms Patel at the nearby embassy after her visit, said: "We believe that some of the procedures can be really simplified.

"We will sort it out later, now we have to let as maximum people we can have as possible.

"All the security checks should be in place for obvious reasons because it is a war."

Earlier, Deputy Prime Minister Dominic Raab told the BBC's Sunday Morning programme: "If we just open the door, not only will we not benefit the people that we need to, the genuine refugees, but I think we undermine the popular support for this very thing, so I don't think that's the right thing to do. We need to make sure that we're acting for those that need our support."

Mr Raab said he expects up to 200,000 Ukrainians could come to the UK through the family dependents route, while "the humanitarian route, that is uncapped".

Asked by ITV News presenter Nina Hossain whether the Government should make it as simple as it was for his father, who fled Czechoslovakia from the Nazis, to come to the UK, the Deputy Prime Minister said: "I don't need to be lectured by you about what my father went through.

"You are talking about something you know little about. It was incredibly difficult for my father to get to the UK."

Under the UK's recently-extended visa scheme, Ukrainians with parents, grandparents, children and siblings already in the UK are allowed to stay for up to three years.

The offer does not match that of EU countries, which have waived visa rules for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, letting them in for up to three years without first having to seek asylum.

More than 1.5 million refugees have already streamed out of Ukraine, the United Nations said as Russia's unprovoked assault on the country entered its 11th day on Sunday.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi tweeted: "More than 1.5 million refugees from Ukraine have crossed into neighbouring countries in 10 days - the fastest growing refugee crisis in Europe since World War II."

**Load-Date:** March 6, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ireland expecting to take around 100,000 Ukrainian refugees, minister says*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y2-0S91-DY4H-K3KY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 12:38 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 452 words

**Byline:** Jon Stone

**Highlight:** Irish government estimates that it could take 80,000 to 100,000 people as UK grants 50 visas so far

**Body**

Ireland is expecting to take in around 100,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, a minister in the country's government has said.

Speaking after a meeting with the World Health Organisation Anne Rabbitte said Ireland would likely take around two per cent of Ukraine's expected five million displaced people.

That figure could get "very real very quickly", she said, as new figures show 1,800 people have already arrived from the country.

The reception from Ireland, whose population is around five million, contrasts with that of its larger neighbour Britain, which has granted just 50 emergency visas to Ukrainians since the Russian invasion of their country.

The UK stands practically alone in Europe in not operating an open door policy for Ukrainians fleeing the conflict -requiring people to have a visa and granting only limited concessions.

France's interior minister Gérald Darmanin accused the British government of a "lack of humanity" on the issue over the weekend as hundreds of Ukrainians gathered at Calais wanting to reach Britain.

Ms Rabbitte, a health minister in Ireland's government from the Fianna Fil party, met with senior World Health Organisation officials this week.

Following the meeting the Irish Times[*reported*](https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/ireland-may-take-in-more-than-100-000-ukrainian-refugees-minister-says-1.4819785) her saying: "At that stage over a million had crossed the border. He said he could see multiples of that crossing over.

"He went as far as to say he could see 4.5 million to 5 million or more crossing the border."

She noted that Ireland expecting to take around two per cent of that figure.

"It is my understanding 671 people have arrived into Ireland from Ukraine but they have gone straight to family already living here," the minister added.

"After that we are looking at finding accommodation for them. So that two per cent is likely to get very real, very quickly."

The latest figures released on Monday show 1,800 people from Ukraine have arrived in Ireland visa-free.

Meanwhile the Irish Independent [*cited*](https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/we-could-be-looking-to-take-100000-refugees-says-minister-41418223.html) Irish government sources who described the 100,000 figure used by the minister as "speculation" - but suggested 80,000 was on the cards.

"We are at the edge of Europe, and there are only 5,000-6,000 Ukrainians living here now - many in the meat industry in the midlands," the quoted source told the newspaper.

"Other analysis says [the total number of refugees] could be less than 80,000. Whatever the numbers, ­Ireland will do its part."

The British government has hinted that it could make the process for Ukrainians to come to Britain easier, but has not laid out any specific policies.

The whole European Union has meanwhile already agreed to grant temporary residency to Ukrainians and give them access to work, the welfare state, and housing for and initial period of three years.

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Sabina Higgins letter ‘a slap in the face’ for Ukrainian refugees in Ireland*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6625-X851-JBNF-W1GC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 31, 2022 Sunday 2:06 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 717 words

**Byline:** David Young

**Highlight:** President Michael D Higgins has faced calls to clarify his position on the Ukraine conflict after his wife’s letter to an Irish newspaper.

**Body**

A controversial letter about the Ukraine conflict written by the [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) president’s wife has been described as a “slap in the face” for the thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have settled in [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland).

President [*Michael D Higgins*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-d-higgins) has faced calls to state unequivocal support for the Ukrainian cause and oppose Russian aggression amid the furore created by his wife Sabina’s letter.

Mrs Higgins wrote to the Irish Times last week to criticise one of the newspaper’s editorials on the conflict.

In the letter, she said the fighting would go on until the world “persuades President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) of Russia and President [*Volodymyr Zelenskiy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelenskiy) of Ukraine to agree to a ceasefire and negotiations”.

Critics have suggested Mrs Higgins was drawing an equivalence between the actions of Ukraine and Russia.

Scrutiny of the letter intensified after it was reportedly published for a brief period on the Irish president’s official website. It appears to have been since removed from the site.

Representatives from parties in Ireland’s coalition government have voiced concern.

Mr and Mrs Higgins attended the opening of the Irish traditional music festival Fleadh Cheoil na hEireann on Sunday.

The president did not address the controversy in his speech at the event in Mullingar, Co Westmeath, though he extended a “special” welcome to those who have come to Ireland “to share shelter with us and to seek safety with us”.

Fine Gael senator John McGahon called on Mr Higgins to clarify whether he was aware of the letter before it was published or had any role in drafting it.

“She is a private citizen, she is entitled to promote whatever type of view she wants, but she is married to the president of this country, she does live in Aras an Uachtarain (the president’s official resident in Dublin) and she does officiate at official events that are run by the state,” Mr McGahon told RTE Radio One’s This Week programme.

“And because of the high-profile nature of her position I believe her views on the Ukrainian invasion are open to critique. I believe they’re open to criticism.”

Mr McGahon claimed the letter made a “moral equivalence” between Russia and Ukraine.

Just arrived in RTÉ.Will be discussing my views on Sabina Higgins Letter and why I believe it was wrong to have it published on the website of [*https://t.co/Rjs6ihhpAi*](https://t.co/Rjs6ihhpAi) [*pic.twitter.com/2WaftLeFhy*](https://t.co/2WaftLeFhy) — Senator John McGahon (@John\_McGahon) [*July 31, 2022*](https://twitter.com/John_McGahon/status/1553710075000274944?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) “If you were to read that letter you’d think that this is a dispute between two countries over a contested piece of land,” he said.“It is Russian tanks that have rolled into Ukraine. It is Russian missiles that have flattened Ukrainian cities. It is Russian soldiers that have murdered women and children in the streets of Ukraine.“And I think the comments that she has made is a slap in the face to the 47,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have come to this island of Ireland to seek safety and seek sanctuary.”On Saturday, Fianna Fail senator Malcolm Byrne challenged Mrs Higgins’ position.“Mrs Higgins is entitled to her personal opinion and to express it, although I believe that she is totally wrong to try to see an equivalence in the positions of Ukraine and Russia,” he said.“However, the decision to publish the letter on the president’s website raises serious questions.“It is incumbent on the president of Ireland to now express clearly the strong support of the people of Ireland for the people of Ukraine and that we hold Russia responsible for the war and ongoing barbarism.“Ireland should rightly be proud of our response to the invasion of Ukraine.”The attacks on & censoring of [*#SabinaHiggins*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/SabinaHiggins?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) are disgraceful. Every effort should be made to achieve a ceasefire and an end to the slaughter in Ukraine. The idea any side can win a “victory” in this war is a recipe for tens of thousands more deaths. [*@IrishAntiWarMvt*](https://twitter.com/IrishAntiWarMvt?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*@pb4p*](https://twitter.com/pb4p?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) — Richard Boyd Barrett (@RBoydBarrett) [*July 31, 2022*](https://twitter.com/RBoydBarrett/status/1553703637070774272?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

There has also been support for Mrs Higgins.

People Before Profit TD Richard Boyd Barrett tweeted: “The attacks on & censoring of #SabinaHiggins are disgraceful. Every effort should be made to achieve a ceasefire and an end to the slaughter in Ukraine. The idea any side can win a ‘victory’ in this war is a recipe for tens of thousands more deaths.”

The office of the president has been contacted for comment.

**Load-Date:** July 31, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees in Manchester given free walking tour by volunteers*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65FB-6WP1-DY4H-K2MD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 13, 2022 Friday 2:41 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 489 words

**Byline:** Zack Ferriday

**Highlight:** Families new to the UK found their feet with the first event of its kind in the UK, organised by a Ukrainian journalist and Manchester tour guide.

**Body**

More than 70 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** were given a free tour of [*Manchester*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/manchester) by volunteers hoping to help them settle in their new home city.

Ukrainian journalist Maria Romanenko and guide Meghan Marie Griffith, of Free Manchester Walking Tours, organised Thursday's tour for recent arrivals to the [*North West*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/north-west) , who explored the stories of [*Alan Turing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/alan-turing) , the Hacienda, and the city's rapid evolution by walking its streets.

"We were experimenting a bit," Ms Romanenko told the PA news agency.

"I don't think this has been done before in the UK, or certainly in Manchester.

"I feel like I can relate to the people coming here fleeing the war and I wanted to do something to help them feel welcome."

Having herself fled the Ukrainian capital with her Mancunian partner in the wake of the Russian invasion, Ms Romanenko sees parallels between Manchester and Kyiv's resilience in the face of adversity.

"What stood out to me yesterday is how Manchester keeps reinventing itself; for example, the [*IRA*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ira) bomb in 1996, even though it destroyed most of the city centre, it allowed for this cultural rebirth.

"I think Kyiv can probably relate to that as well; (after) the [*Euromaidan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/euromaidan) revolution we experienced a cultural boom.

"I hope that the mention of these horrible things that happened to Manchester, such as the IRA bomb or the attack at the Ariana Grande concert, shows people that, yes, it's very hard for Ukraine now but there is a way that people can unite and build something new.

I'm not a professional translator but I thought "hey, if I can offer my language skills for a free tour for Ukrainians, that'd be my bit, something I can do." And so [*@MeganMegaMegMe*](https://twitter.com/MeganMegaMegMe?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) of [*@FreeTours\_MCR*](https://twitter.com/FreeTours_MCR?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) and I did this thing. At least 70 Ukrainians showed up! I hope they enjoyed it. [*pic.twitter.com/s0xslyFN5W*](https://t.co/s0xslyFN5W) - Maria Romanenko (@rommari) [*May 12, 2022*](https://twitter.com/rommari/status/1524832934200496150?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

"I hope that some of the examples mentioned in the tour can give people hope."

As well as helping people learn about the city, the event on Thursday provided a way for Ukrainians to find each other in the city.

"Two people had a friend in common but they had never met before, and it turned out that they have something they can talk about.

"It was a great way for Ukrainians to meet each other so they don't get too lonely when they get to what for most people is a completely new country."

She hopes their efforts will lead to more organised action from authorities to help refugees find their feet.

"There are people willing to give up their time," Ms Romanenko said, "but they don't know how, they've never been approached by the Government."

The tour has drawn the attention of those in a position to help further: "Somebody from Manchester City Council turned up before to start just to chat to me, we are going to have a meeting at some point.

"It's small steps like this, but hopefully it will lead to better engagement with Ukrainians and more effort from the local government to help them settle in."

**Load-Date:** May 13, 2022

**End of Document**



[*More than 80,000 Ukrainian refugees could arrive in Ireland, minister says*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XV-HF71-DY4H-K51C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 6, 2022 Sunday 3:28 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 396 words

**Byline:** David Young

**Highlight:** Preparations are under way to accommodate the significant number of people due to arrive in the country in the coming days and weeks.

**Body**

The number of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving in [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) could exceed 80,000, a government minister has confirmed.

James Browne, minister of state in the [*Department of Justice*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/department-of-justice) , said the exodus of people from Ukraine was on a scale not witnessed in [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) since the end of the Second World War.

His comments came as the UN announced that more than 1.5 million people have now fled Ukraine since the Russian invasion.

The updated estimate on the number of refugees expected in Ireland comes amid government efforts to bolster domestic grain production in response to the anticipated significant disruption of supply lines from Ukraine and Russia.

Agriculture Minister Charlie McConalogue is to meet with farmers' representatives on Tuesday to develop a plan that could potentially see all Irish farmers sow crops in the forthcoming growing season.

Hundreds of Ukrainians are already arriving in Ireland every day as they flee the conflict in their homeland.

Around 1,400 have entered the country thus far, though many of those are staying with relatives who already lived in Ireland.

Government ministers are examining a variety of options to accommodate the unprecedented number of further arrivals.

We are now potentially looking at 80,000-plus, there is not going to be any cap on those numbers coming into this country

Minister of state James Browne

The use of modular homes on state land is being explored and members of the public will also be asked to volunteer to host refugees.

"The last time we've seen a kind of movement like this, to this degree in Europe, was at the end of World War Two when we saw a huge movement of German people who became refugees at the end of that war," Mr Browne told RTE's The Week in Politics programme.

"We haven't seen anything like this since then.

"Now we have learned a lot over recent years in terms of dealing with the pandemic that we do know we have that capacity and that generosity and capability within a country to mobilise when we need to in the face of a very, very serious situation.

"But we are now potentially looking at 80,000-plus, there is not going to be any cap on those numbers coming into this country."

Anti-war protests continued in Ireland over the weekend.

On Sunday, crowds again gathered outside the Russian embassy in [*Dublin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dublin) to denounce the invasion and call for the expulsion of Russia's Ambassador to Ireland Yuri Filatov.

**Load-Date:** March 6, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Priti Patel refuses to waive visa rules for fleeing Ukrainian refugees because of 'security advice'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WJ-WTF1-DY4H-K3WY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 28, 2022 Monday 4:45 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:5

**Length:** 482 words

**Byline:** Rob Merrick

**Highlight:** Hardline home secretary shocks MPs expecting a rethink - after existing measures were attacked as 'shameful'

**Body**

[*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) has refused to copy the EU by waiving visa rules for [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) fleeing [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , insisting it would undermine "the strongest security advice".

A fellow cabinet minister had hinted a rethink was on the way - after strict limits [*even on bringing in the family members*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-refugees-uk-family-russia-b2024712.html) of Ukrainians already in the UK were attacked as "shameful".

But the home secretary ruled out waiving visas, telling MPs: "The approach we are taking is based on the strongest security advice."

Ms Patel claimed up to 100,000 Ukrainians could still come to the UK - even though only the partners, children or sick relatives of those already here will be admitted.

The hardline stance drew strong criticism in the Commons - as well as bewilderment over what Ms Patel was announcing in highly confusing comments.

At one point, the home secretary described a "new humanitarian route", but appeared to be ruling out any further help beyond the very tightly limited rules for some family members.

Earlier, the EU revealed it is granting asylum for up to three years, without the need for an asylum application - as hundreds of thousands of desperate people cross Ukraine's borders.

[*Ben Wallace*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ben-wallace) , the defence secretary, hinted similar UK action would follow and [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) 's spokesperson told journalists: "There will be further support, as you would expect, for those who are fleeing the violence."

Senior Conservatives have written to the prime minister, demanding "decisive" action, including ex-ministers Jeremy Hunt, Robert Buckland, Greg Clark, Damian Green and Caroline Nokes.

And public opinion opposes the government's block on refugees, some 77 per cent telling YouGov they back allowing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to come to the UK without a visa.

The government has been under fire since the immigration minister Kevin Foster suggested, on Saturday, that escaping Ukrainians could apply to be seasonal fruit pickers in the UK.

He deleted a tweet and was disowned by Downing Street - but refused to apologise for the comment when urged to in the Commons.

It comes as The Independent 's Refugees Welcome campaign called on the UK government to set up a resettlement scheme to give Ukrainians fleeing the invasion sanctuary in Britain.

It is urging the government to follow countries such as Ireland and Portugal, which have already said that they will accept ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** without requiring visas.

Rejecting lifting visa rules, Ms Patel pointed to "what Putin's Russia is willing to do, even on our soil, as we saw through the Salisbury attack".

"Security and biometric checks are a fundamental part of our visa approval process worldwide and will continue, as they did for the evacuation of people from Afghanistan," she told MPs.

"That is vital to keep British citizens safe and to ensure that we are helping those in genuine need, particularly as Russian troops are now infiltrating Ukraine and merging into Ukrainian forces."

**Load-Date:** February 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UK pledge to take Ukrainian refugees with family in Britain excludes siblings, adult children and parents*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WH-PPF1-DY4H-K2SM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 28, 2022 Monday 9:40 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 658 words

**Byline:** Jon Stone and May Bulman

**Highlight:** Ministers accused of putting 'plaster on open wound' with 'shameful' response

**Body**

A pledge by the government to give Ukrainians with family in Britain refuge from the war has sweeping and major exemptions, the Home Office has revealed.

The [*details of the "temporary visa concessions"*](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/support-for-family-members-of-british-nationals-in-ukraine-and-ukrainian-nationals-in-ukraine-and-the-uk) for Ukrainians published on Sunday night show they only apply to spouses, the parents of children under 18 or a child under 18, and close relatives requiring care.

Labour branded the government "shameful" after Priti Patel's department said that vast swathes of close family would be excluded from the programme. British relatives of Ukrainian nationals described the limited change as "a plaster to an open wound".

Brothers and sisters, the parents of people over 18, and children who have reached the age of 18 are among those not included in the "concessions" for family migration visas.

The weakness of the scheme comes despite Boris Johnson telling an audience at a Ukrainian cathedral on Sunday that Britain "cannot shut our eyes" to the war in the country.

But despite Mr Johnson's rhetoric, under the rules ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) fleeing the invasion who do not have immediate family connections on the very limited list will be denied entry.

The Independent last week launched its [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) campaign, calling on the government to set up a resettlement scheme to grant sanctuary in the UK to Ukrainians fleeing the bloody conflict.

Kateryna Shamshuryna-Acland, a British-Ukrainian national who has lived in the UK since 2009, told The Independent the visa changes would do nothing to help her elderly mother, Ganna Shamshuryna, who is currently "stuck in her flat and terrified" in Ukraine.

"This announcement is nothing. It's a plaster to an open wound," said Ms Shamshuryna-Acland, 35, who lives in Milton Keynes with her British husband and three children and works as an intelligence officer for Thames Valley Police.

"It's difficult for my mother to even get out of Ukraine. She's hearing shooting outside her flat. But if she could get a visa I would go to pick her up and try get her across the border with her.

"If I did that now we could be out there for ages, waiting for an answer from the Home Office. It will cause extra heartache. She will say why did I bother to risk my life walking across trying to seek a safe haven when the UK will just say no?"

It comes after [*The Independent*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/police-officer-mother-home-office-visa-ukraine-uk-b1806318.html) reported last year that Ms Shamshuryna had been blocked from entering the UK -where her daughter and grandchildren live -for years.

"They're not doing enough," Ms Shamshuryna-Acland added. "I think the UK should accept ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** until it calms down, whether they have relatives here or not. Poland is taking a massive hit.

"You can't just wait for it to go away, it's not going to go away. They have to take robust action and they need to do it fast."

Reacting to the new rules, Yvette Cooper, Labour's shadow home secretary said: "Updated guidance just published by Home Office shows even this first step does not apply to wider family.

"What are they thinking? What about people struggling to get elderly parents here, or Ukrainians who can't come stay with sister or brother here?

She said that it was "shameful of the government to refuse to even help other relatives in a terrible European war like this", adding:

"The Home Office must immediately extend this to wider family members and then they must set out a broader sanctuary route so UK also does its bit to help other Ukrainians too."

The definition of immediate family member is the same as the restrictive one ordinarily used in the UK's immigration regime - which has long faced criticism from campaigners.

In parallel to the UK, the European Union has agreed to host ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** for three years without asking them to apply for asylum, and regardless of whether they have a family connection in any of the 27 member states.

About 370,000 people have fled [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) since Vladimir Putin launched his invasion, according to an estimate by the United Nations.

**Load-Date:** February 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees may end up in hotels, charity warns*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6502-G7M1-JCS0-D4B1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 12, 2022 Saturday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 7

**Length:** 1362 words

**Byline:** ANDREW WOODCOCK, ADAM FORREST, ASHLEY COWBURN

**Body**

Refugee workers have warned that Ukrainians seeking sanctuary from war may end up in hotel accommodation because of the "decimation" of official resettlement programmes. They warned that sponsorship schemes of the kind that is set to be launched by Michael Gove on Monday should supplement, not replace, large-scale state programmes, amid fears that generous communities were being expected to "pick up the pieces" in the absence of official help.

Meanwhile, Labour accused the government of "dragging its feet" over the scheme, which was first announced by Boris Johnson a fortnight ago but was reportedly delayed by wrangling over the benefits to be granted to the new arrivals. Shadow communities secretary Lisa Nandy said it would be "unconscionable" if it was as cumbersome as a similar programme set up in 2016 during the Syrian war, which has taken up to two years to place refugees and has so far helped only around 660.

The Independent has launched a petition calling for the UK to lead the international community in helping those who have been displaced by the conflict.

The new humanitarian sponsorship scheme will allow individuals, charities, businesses and communities to open a route for Ukrainians without family links to enter the UK, by offering them accommodation and support, potentially for six months. There will be no cap on numbers, and government sources believe tens of thousands could take up the offer.

A hotline and website will be set up for volunteers, and each offer of accommodation will be vetted for safety. They will then be matched with Ukrainians who have been through Home Office checks after applying for help.

The plan was first announced by the prime minister on 1 March amid criticism over the UK's failure to follow EU allies and simply waive visas for Ukrainians fleeing Vladmir Putin's war. But its launch is understood to have been held up by a departmental spat over whether arrivals should be given full refugee status, entitling them to receive assistance including housing benefit and child benefit, or a temporary status offering more restricted support.

It is understood that they will be allowed to work and access public services for an initial period of 12 months. It is not thought that hosts will receive payment for welcoming them in.

The proposal has already prompted a generous response from the British public, with 1,500 offers of help received by the Sanctuary Foundation, and 500 in the past week alone by Reset, an organisation helping churches and charities sponsor refugees. Refugees at Home, a charity helping individuals provide accommodation, said applications had soared from 20 a fortnight to around 1,000 in the two weeks since the outbreak of war.

But Refugee Council chief executive Enver Solomon said that the plans had so far been "vague at best", with no detail about how the scheme would work or what funding would be provided by the government.

"This is all the more frustrating given the clear desire from people up and down the country to support ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in their communities, who would jump at the chance to do so through sponsorship," said Mr Solomon. "For any scheme to be a success, we must see the government working quickly and effectively to have a clear plan in place, and funding allocated to enable councils, health services, schools and communities to best prepare for welcoming ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** through a comprehensive programme of support."

Charities have expressed doubt that the new sponsorship scheme can be scaled up quickly, since it will require a lot of time, training and paperwork to organise. Groups are expected to provide refugees with support accessing benefits and services, as well as a home.

Kate Brown, co-director at Reset, said: "The existing Community Sponsorship scheme has shown how friends and neighbours can welcome refugees, and we believe there are many lessons that can be learnt from this amazing work. However, the existing scheme takes time to prepare and get ready for, and it would not be suitable for responding to emergency situations [like] this."

Tim Naor Hilton, chief executive of Refugee Action, told The Independent that the failure to maintain previous resettlement programmes had left the UK unprepared for an influx of refugees, with the result that thousands fleeing Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover last summer are still in "temporary" hotel accommodation. Official data shows that the number of people who come to Britain under refugee resettlement schemes has plummeted by 75 per cent in the last four years, from 6,212 in 2017 to 1,578 in 2021.

"Ministers have decimated our once-successful refugee resettlement programmes to the point where they have been left unable to respond effectively to the conflict in Ukraine," said Mr Hilton. "By scrapping the UK's long-term resettlement commitments, the government has left local authorities unable to invest in services and keep a stock of housing for refugees.

"That is why 12,000 Afghan refugees are still stuck in hotels seven months on from the Afghanistan evacuation, and why we are deeply concerned that the government is considering similar forms of "temporary" accommodation for Ukrainians." There are already 37,000 asylum seekers and Afghan refugees living in hotels awaiting more permanent homes, costing taxpayers almost £5m per day.

Mr Hilton said that sponsorship schemes were "a wonderful way for communities to support refugees". But he warned: "These schemes were only ever envisaged to be additional to large-scale government resettlement programmes that are the only way to manage much greater numbers at pace. And it's being able to welcome high numbers of refugees at speed that is exactly what is needed in a crisis.

"We are left with the impression that the government is leaving it to communities to pick up the pieces of a UK refugee protection system that has been run into the ground. This is simply not good enough." He called on MPs to back House of Lords amendments to the government's Refugees Bill, currently going through parliament, to create a commitment to resettle 10,000 people every year.

Ms Nandy said: "Weeks after the invasion of Ukraine, the British people stand ready and willing to help while their government drags its feet. Excessive bureaucracy and a lack of planning cannot be allowed to get in the way of sanctuary for people fleeing Putin. The government is behaving as if these were ordinary times. This is an extraordinary challenge and it calls for extraordinary measures."

Home Office minister Baroness Williams said 1,305 visas for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** with family links in the UK had been issued by Thursday.

Mr Johnson has said that the family route could eventually assist as many as 200,000 people, but with more than 2.5 million Ukrainians fleeing their homeland, the numbers so far taken by Britain are dwarfed by those accepted by neighbouring Poland, Hungary and Slovakia and the 250,000-plus who have fled elsewhere in the EU.

The former head of the diplomatic service, Peter Ricketts, told the House of Lords yesterday that Britain must improve its "inadequate" cooperation with the EU to prevent scenes like those in Calais, when hundreds of Ukrainians were turned away as they tried to reach their families in the UK.

"Given the number of traumatised Ukrainian citizens who are now leaving the country, this flow of refugees is bound to continue for months, conceivably years," said Lord Ricketts. "We really do need to be working well with our EU partners if we're going to avoid damaging the climate of confidence, which is so important for good law enforcement and judicial cooperation."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, click here. To sign the petition click here. If you would like to donate then please click here for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Far from home, Ukrainian refugees pray at Easter for peace*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6599-3NH1-JBNF-W40S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 24, 2022 Sunday 4:03 PM GMT

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**Length:** 484 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Far from home and unsure when or even if they will ever return, Ukrainians displaced by war gathered at churches across Eastern Europe on Sunday for the Orthodox Easter holiday

**Body**

Far from home and unsure when or even if they will ever get back, Ukrainians displaced by war gathered at churches across Eastern Europe on Sunday to celebrate the Orthodox Easter holiday in safety and to pray for an end to the fighting with [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia).

Hundreds of believers crowded into the Church of Saint Michael in Hungary's capital of [*Budapest*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/budapest) to take part in a liturgy delivered by a Ukrainian priest, a sermon that focused on the cohesion of the Ukrainian people and prayer for those left behind.

"As Ukraine celebrates this holiday, for us Ukrainian [*Christians*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/christ) , it is also a celebration that gives us hope that with the resurrection will also come victory in Ukraine, and that good will prevail over evil," said priest Damien Habory after the one-hour service.

The Easter holiday, observed by Orthodox followers according to the Julian calendar, comes as nearly 5.2 million Ukrainians have been forced to flee the violence unleashed on their country by Russia's invasion.

Most have entered countries on Ukraine's western border: nearly 2.9 million Ukrainians have fled to Poland, while 775,000 others have fled to Romania and 490,000 have crossed into Hungary since the war began two months ago.

In Bucharest, the Romanian capital, dozens of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** as well as Romanian faithful came to the Brancusi Parish Church for the Easter liturgy, and to hear a choir sing religious songs in Ukrainian. A priest chanted "Christ is Risen!" to the worshippers, to which they responded, "Indeed he is risen!"

Following the service in Budapest, worshippers lined the street in front of the church with Easter baskets packed with offerings of hand-dyed eggs, candles and pasca - a traditional Easter sweet bread. Habory greeted the worshippers and blessing their Easter baskets with holy water flicked from a liturgical brush used for blessings.

Yaroslava Hortyanyi, chairwoman of the Hungarian Ukrainian Cultural Association, said that bringing Ukrainians together for the Easter holiday was an opportunity for them to pray for themselves and for those they left behind.

"We are all happy for the resurrection of Christ, but we don't have happiness in our hearts because at the same moment Ukrainian children, Ukrainian soldiers and Ukrainian people are dying," Hortyanyi said. "People who believe in God believe that this is a way for God to test them ... They believe that their prayers will help their husbands and parents that they left at home."

Kate Gladka, 31, who came to Hungary from Ukraine's capital of Kyiv a month ago, said she had struggled to hold back her tears during the Easter service, which for her is usually a time for celebration.

"We have new meaning this year because we may be the most alive nation in the world now, and we understand what it means to arise all the time," she said.

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Follow all AP stories on Russia's war against Ukraine at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine).

**Load-Date:** April 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Oxford children’s choir has helped ‘heal souls’ of Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68H6-5YP1-DY4H-K3VP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 19, 2023 Monday 11:01 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 860 words

**Byline:** Danielle Desouza

**Highlight:** Choir tutor Yevheniia Diachenko said: ‘They feel support from each other and music helps to heal their souls.’

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who are part of an Oxford-based children’s choir have spoken of how music has helped to “heal their souls” and make them feel as though they are “not alone”.

Cherwell College Oxford, a family-run independent co-educational boarding and day school for students between the ages of 12 and 18, set up The Cherwell Choir in January 2023 to unite Ukrainian refugee children arriving in the UK because of the full-scale Russian invasion.

The choir – which has one-hour sessions on Wednesdays from 5.30pm – sing a mix of Ukrainian and [*English*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/english) songs and practice vocal techniques, guided by musician Yevheniia Diachenko, who is herself a Ukrainian refugee.

“[Music helps them] feel more relaxed and when I see these kids, they sing, they dance, they forget about everything like the bad things”, the 41-year-old who is based in Oxford told the PA news agency on June 20, which marks World Refugee Day.

“When they sing, they show their emotions and sometimes they even cry, but in a good way.

“They miss their families, they miss their dads who stay in Ukraine, but they feel support from each other and music helps to heal their souls.”

Mrs Diachenko used to have her own private vocal school in [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) and said she wanted to continue teaching singing lessons when she arrived in Oxford on July 27, 2022 with her nine-year-old daughter Katrin and their pet cat, so organised for the choir to be set up alongside other mothers of Ukrainian children and staff at Cherwell College.

“We wanted the children to feel more at home, to speak with each other and play together”, she added.

Reflecting on the day she fled her home in Kyiv, she said: “All of those emotions have come back to me.

“It was a horrible day for every Ukrainian.

“I was at home and I woke up because I heard some explosions and I was scared and frustrated because I didn’t know what to do.

“After five days, my husband said to me that I needed to leave with my daughter and it all happened really fast.”

Katrin told PA: “It was a really sad time, especially the first time we left.

“I was really sad and I missed my dad.”

Despite still missing her home and family back in Ukraine, she said that the choir has helped her to navigate her new life and connected her with her mother.

“I think art helped me when I came here and I thought that because my mummy is a singing teacher, I can do some singing too to help her”, she said.

“The choir is really nice, I have really good friends here and I like singing.

“I think [singing] Shum is my favourite and I like Stefania [by Kalush Orchestra].”

When PA attended one of the choir sessions, the group sang Katrin’s favourite songs while moving their hands and swaying from side-to-side, as well as pop ballads including Katy Perry’s Firework and Adam Young’s Fireflies.

Katrin added that it is “really cool” to have her mother as her singing teacher, and it prevents her from worrying about her as she is there with her.

For 10-year-old Alisa Klauning, the choir has helped her to feel as though she is “not alone”.

“I feel quite safe in this community and I feel that I can talk with anybody about what’s happened in Ukraine – and they will say, I remember that”, she told PA.

“The hardest thing in school is probably just communicating with people because you don’t really know English as much as they do.

“And I really like music and my life has somehow been connected with music since I was really really little.”

Alisa escaped from her home in Kyiv with her sister Yeva, 15, and her mother Nataly – who works at Cherwell College Oxford as a communications officer – on March 5, 2022.

They reached their host family in Long Hanborough in [*Oxfordshire*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/oxfordshire) on March 29, 2022 and then moved to Oxford in April 2023.

“The first time they said we have to leave Ukraine, I just didn’t believe it”, she said.

“And then we were on a train and going away just like that.

“But I just felt like my mum knew what she was doing and so I just gave myself to her and said, do anything.”

Helen Clarke, who is Ukrainian and runs Cherwell College alongside her husband [*Stephen*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/stephen) , said that when the invasion happened, “naturally the college wanted to help dislocated children go through the transition in the easiest way possible”.

“They have performed in St Michael’s Church on May 20. It was a wonderful performance and we look forward to supporting them to perform many more concerts in the future,” the Vice Principal added.

The College has also supported dislocated Ukrainians through culture weeks from October of last year, which have showcased Ukrainian art and music.

Mr Clarke, who is the College’s Principal, told PA: “As well as helping Ukrainians, we also want to remind people what they’re going though.

“These people have been torn away from their country, from their families, from their husbands and sons who aren’t allowed to leave the country and losing people because of the conflict.”

The former diplomat who was the First Secretary at the British Embassy in Kyiv from 2000 to 2003 added: “It is also important for people to understand what Putin’s mission is – his mission is [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) , he believes Russia is Europe, and we have to try and stop him, it’s as simple as that.”

**Load-Date:** June 19, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Minister refuses to rule out that Ukrainian refugees could be deported to Rwanda*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65DX-49V1-DY4H-K0M3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 11, 2022 Wednesday 1:28 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 979 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Tom Pursglove also indicates Afghans who served with British Army could face removal under policy

**Body**

A [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) minister has refused to rule out that ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) could be deported to [*Rwanda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rwanda) under [*Priti Patel's new asylum policy.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/priti-patel-rwanda-channel-crossings-b2075062.html)

Speaking to MPs on Wednesday, immigration minister Tom Pursglove said that decisions to ship [*asylum seekers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/asylum-seekers-0) to the east African country would be considered on a "case by case basis" - and did not deny that people who have fled [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) could be among them.

During an evidence hearing with the Home Affairs Select Committee, he also declined to rule out that Afghan nationals who worked alongside the British Army could be deported under the policy.

Asked whether refugees who have escaped the Russian invasion could be among the cohort relocated, Mr Pursglove said: "There is absolutely no reason why any Ukrainian should be getting in a small boat, paying a smuggler to get to the UK.

"People should be using those safe and legal routes that are available. We look at cases on a case by cases basis, but it is crucial to get the message across that people should be using the safe and legal routes if they come from Ukraine. It would be absurd to do otherwise."

When asked about Ukrainians who have arrived via Northern Ireland - a number of whom have -Home Office official Dan Hobbs, who was also giving evidence, didn't rule out that they would be sent to Rwanda.

"Depending on the individual circumstances, they may not fall in the inadmissibility criteria," he said.

The Independent 's [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome) campaign has called on the UK government to do more to help those escaping danger in Afghanistan and the Ukraine.

Official Home Office documents published on Monday revealed that ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have not been excluded from the inadmissibility policy, which will determine who can be considered for removal to Rwanda.

The guidance suggests that anyone who "travelled through safe third countries" like Poland or France can be considered under the policy.

The two safe and legal routes under which ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** can enter the UK -the Ukraine Family Scheme and the [*Homes for Ukraine scheme*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-family-scheme-refugees-home-office-b2057957.html) -have been beset with delays. The latest government data shows that 37,400 of 125,100 applicants have so far arrived in Britain.

When asked later in the hearing whether Afghans, including those who served with the British Army, who arrive on small boats they would be removed to Rwanda, the minister again refused to rule this out.

"In terms of Afghanistan, there are established safe and legal routes via which people should come to the UK. Nobody should be getting in a small boat to come to the UK," he said.

[*The Independent revealed*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/afghanistan-resettlement-taliban-refugees-home-office-uk-b2050397.html) last month that thousands of Afghans who worked alongside the British military were still trapped in the country eight months after the fall of [*Kabul*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kabul) , as UK government resources have been diverted in an effort to deal with the Ukrainian refugee crisis.

Meanwhile, major charities including [*Oxfam and Refugee Action have warned*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/afghanistan-resettlement-taliban-refugees-home-office-uk-b2050397.html) that the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme -a separate route announced in January -offers "little or no capacity for those most at risk in Afghanistan to come to the UK in a safe and secure manner".

Mr Pursglove also admitted that there had been no concrete modelling carried out to provide an evidence base for the plan to send asylum seekers to Rwanda, describing it as a "new and untested policy".

He claimed that it would have a "deterrent effect" and that in the "fullness of time" it would "make a difference" - but this is "difficult to quantify".

"It is whole system change [...] I do think that in the fullness of time we will see this policy as part of a wider package we're introducing really shift the dynamic. What is abs clear is we can't continue with the status quo," the minister added.

Mr Hobbs said there had some "assumption modelling" had been carried out into the impact, but added that understanding individual decision-making of asylum seekers was "complicated".

During the evidence session the minister also revealed that the Home Office would be spending the same amount on the processing of each asylum seeker sent to Rwanda as it currently does - around £12,000 per person.

But he was unable to give details on the overall number of asylum seekers who would be deported to the African country under the policy, and how much this would cost the UK government in total.

Chair of the Joint Committee on Human Rights, Joanna Cherry, asked the minister whether he accepted evidence from a US state department report and human rights organisations revealing evidence of unlawful or arbitrary killings and forced disappearances in Rwanda.

In response, Mr Pursglove said the UK government did "not believe there were systematic breaches of human rights" in the country, adding that the Rwandans are "determined to live up to our international obligations".

Asked what the penalty would be if an asylum seeker -for example a lesbian woman -faced discimnation or abuse in the country on the basis of her sexuality, the minister had no clear answer, saying only that this would be "for the British government to decide".

It comes after the Home Office [*admitted that LGBT+ refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/home-office-rwanda-priti-patel-refugees-lgbt-b2075420.html) who are deported to Rwanda could be persecuted on the basis of their sexual orientation - but still plans to send them there.

Government documents published on Monday also[*revealed*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/rwanda-asylum-seekers-home-office-uk-b2075674.html) that serious shortcomings in the country's asylum system - which those deported from Britain will enter into - with some individuals forced to wait years for a decision in the country and two thirds ultimately rejected.

The Independent has set up a petition calling on the UK government to be at the forefront of the international community offering aid and support to those in Ukraine. To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees/u/30286981) .

**Load-Date:** May 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*US is ready to accept Ukrainian refugees fleeing invasion, White House says*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64VV-JBC1-JBNF-W48D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 25, 2022 Friday 1:39 AM GMT

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**Section:** AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:3

**Length:** 411 words

**Byline:** Andrew Buncombe

**Highlight:** Many European nations scrambling to help Ukrainians

**Body**

[*The White House*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/white-house%22%20title=%22White%20House) has said the US is ready to accept[***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine%22%20title=%22Ukraine) ***refugees*** fleeing the invasion by [*Russia.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia%22%20title=%22Russia)

As reports suggested as many as 100,000 Ukrainians had already left their homes in the wake of the invasion by Russian forces, the White House said it was prepared to accept refugees and to assist countries in Europe where people may head.

"We are," White House press secretary Jen Psaki told CNN on Thursday, when when asked if the US was prepared to help in such a manner.

"But we certainly expect that most if not the majority will want to go to Europe and neighboring countries," she added.

Several thousand Ukrainians have crossed into neighbouring countries, mainly Moldova and Romania, while an estimated 100,000 have fled their homes and are uprooted in the country after Russia's invasion, the UN refugee agency said on Thursday.

[*Ukraine-Russia news - live: Putin's forces advance towards Kiev as 60 battalion tactical groups cross border*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-putin-war-invasion-today-b2022101.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine)

Shabia Mantoo, spokesperson of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said the figures were compiled from reports from national authorities and its staff and partner agencies.

"It's a ballpark figure," she told Reuters.

Meanwhile, other countries in Europe were scrambling to prepare as hundreds of people started arriving at reception centres.

The countries on the European Union's eastern flank were all once part of the Moscow-led Warsaw Pact and are now members of Nato. Among them, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and Romania all share land borders with Ukraine.

Russia has launched an all-out invasion of Ukraine by land, air and sea, the biggest attack by one state against another in Europe since World War Two. It has fuelled fears of a massive flood of refugees fleeing Ukraine, a nation of 44 million people.

Poland called for the "fiercest possible sanctions" against Russia. Czech President Milos Zeman, long sympathetic to Moscow, called Russian President Vladimir Putin a "madman" and Prague stopped issuing visas to Russians and ordered closure of two Russian consulates.

Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who has also forged good ties with Mr Putin, also condemned Moscow's actions. He said Hungary would prepare humanitarian aid for Ukraine and was ready to receive refugees.

Ukrainians started trickling into Poland, home to the region's largest Ukrainian community of around 1 million and the easiest EU country to reach from Kiev.

Additional reporting by agencies

**Load-Date:** February 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Charity event raises £1,500 as Ukrainian refugees serve up traditional dishes*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65D2-2B31-DY4H-K1WK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 7, 2022 Saturday 12:23 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 439 words

**Byline:** Lily Ford

**Highlight:** The UK sponsor of two of the head chefs in charge of the supper described the evening as 'a great success'.

**Body**

Around £1,500 was raised for charity as refugees in [*Somerset*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/somerset) cooked traditional Ukrainian meals for more than 70 people in a sold-out event.

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** were offered free rein of the kitchen at The Bridge cafe in Langport on Friday to cook a three-course dinner for local people in aid of The Ukrainian Red Cross Society.

Steve Dury, 59, is UK sponsor of two of the head chefs in charge of the supper and described the evening as "a great success".

"Everyone just had a fabulous, fabulous evening," the local government officer told the PA news agency.

"What was nice about it was as well as bringing the local community together, it brought the Ukrainians here together.

"They could speak Ukrainian together.

"It was very, very, very nice - very quite emotional, I think, both for the Ukrainians and for the British hosts."

Mr Dury said tickets for the dinner were sold out in just a few days but "they could have sold it out twice over it was so popular".

Since April 12, he has been host to Liudmyla Tarasenko and her 15-year-old daughter, Daria, Liudmyla's 27-year-old niece Yulia Svichkar and her three-year-old son, Egor, as well as 13-year-old Denys Chemodanov.

Ms Tarasenko and Ms Svichkar were among the team making traditional Ukrainian food such as golubsty, a stuffed cabbage leaf with rice, beef and pork filling, and cupcakes decorated blue and yellow alongside a fruit compote.

"We had two musicians who played for free, a winery nearby donated free wine," Mr Dury said.

"There's a butcher in Langport that donated the meat, so lots of local businesses in the community all pulled together.

Mr Dury added the feedback on the food was "very positive".

"[*People*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/people) really enjoyed the food," he said.

"There was a lot of people who had their first ever Ukrainian meal.

"With the food, the bar, music, (it was) a very relaxed, very friendly evening."

He said one of the highlights was when many of the refugees decided to sing along to some backing music they had on a tape.

"It brought them together," Mr Dury said.

"Some of them hadn't met before, it's the first time they had met - so they were able to network, meet members of the local community.

"Lots of the Ukrainian kids were around, so they all had fun playing in the garden."

Mr Dury praised the local community in Langport for their generosity and flexibility.

"(The staff at The Bridge) were absolutely magnificent," he said.

"They gave up their cafe for the evening, allowed everyone to come into the kitchen and cook, they bought a lot of ingredients and made the space available.

"The people in Langport have been so, so welcoming and so helpful with donations and assistance."

**Load-Date:** May 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Charity helps Ukrainian refugees feel at home in Scotland*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6712-CRM1-DY4H-K361-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

December 4, 2022 Sunday 2:10 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 342 words

**Byline:** Dan Barker

**Highlight:** Barnardo’s Scotland Welcome (Ukraine) Service helps families from the country feel safe, welcomed and included.

**Body**

More than 300 Ukrainian children, young people and families who were forced to flee their homeland when [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) launched its invasion have been supported in [*Scotland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scotland) thanks to a charity initiative.

Barnardo’s Scotland Welcome (Ukraine) Service, which was set up in the summer, works to ensure refugees from the war torn country feel safe, welcomed and included in their early life north of the border.

The charity has given more than 300 Barnardo’s Scotland £100 vouchers, alongside other items, to displaced families, including toys and dozens of mobile sim cards.

Barnardo’s is here to help children and families who have fled the war in [*#Ukraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Ukraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) and need support. Speak to one of our friendly advisors in English, Ukrainian or Russian by calling us for free on 0800 148 8586 or visit: [*https://t.co/05E00kPqx8*](https://t.co/05E00kPqx8) [*#UkraineIndependenceDay*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/UkraineIndependenceDay?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/nieCBRxA7k*](https://t.co/nieCBRxA7k) — Barnardo's Scotland (@BarnardosScot) [*August 24, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BarnardosScot/status/1562454280996433922?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Martin Crewe, director of Barnardo’s Scotland, said his organisation offers support across Scotland, notably in hotels and on board cruise ships MS Ambition and MS [*Victoria*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/victoria) , to make sure Ukrainians feel less isolated and can begin to integrate into their communities.

“Information about how to access support with money, benefits and employment is provided along with exploring ways to reduce isolation,” he said.

“None of this would have been possible without our dedicated team.

“We have been very fortunate to recruit five sessional staff who have been displaced from Ukraine along with having four staff who have been settled in the UK for a number of years.

“This is ensuring that we have cultural understanding and compassion for those living with us in Scotland.”

Other essential items donated to families include clothing, footwear, digital equipment, baby items, prams, wheelchairs and walking aids.

Allocated project workers offer practical support, including helping access digital devices to ensure families stay connected.

The charity works with local authorities and other organisations as part of the project.

**Load-Date:** December 4, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Polish tech entrepreneur hopes to house 500 Ukrainian refugees in hotel*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YX-2F91-JBNF-W139-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 11, 2022 Friday 1:46 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 427 words

**Byline:** Henry Jones

**Highlight:** Marek Zmyslowski's foundation has already provided beds in a hostel in Warsaw for 50 families, he told the PA news agency.

**Body**

A [*Polish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/polish) tech entrepreneur has launched a fundraising effort to house 500 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in a hotel, helping them to find their feet after Russia's invasion.

About 1.5 million people are thought to have fled to Poland since Russia's invasion began.

Marek Zmyslowski, 36, from Koszalin in north-west Poland, founded the MaYa Foundation, which in its own words aims to help those with the "least amount of luck in life".

Mr Zmyslowski's foundation has already provided spaces in a hostel in [*Warsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warsaw) for 50 families to stay for a few days.

He now wants to house 500 people in a hotel in Sypniewo, Poland.

Speaking to the PA news agency, he said his family's experience of both world wars, passed down to him, has left him with a "deep fear of any type of war embedded in my DNA".

He said that refugees "need a night or two just to calm down, release the tension, finally get some sleep and maybe wash clothes. That's why we need to give them two free nights in Warsaw".

Explaining his plans for the hotel, he said: "Then, you want to move them for a couple of weeks somewhere else, just so they can figure out what the future is going to be like - they're going to find a job, they're going to go to Denmark, Italy, [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) , wherever, right. So this is like the second stage."

Fantastic Update ! [*pic.twitter.com/1YmuPJotLw*](https://t.co/1YmuPJotLw) - Marek Zmyslowski (@marekchinedu) [*March 6, 2022*](https://twitter.com/marekchinedu/status/1500472745460736005?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Reflecting on Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Mr Zmyslowski added: "The only thing that makes Poland different than Ukraine is that we entered (the) [*European Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/european-union) and Nato before.

"So this could have been easily us, and I think this is why it's so relatable for me.

"I got really, really upset when all of this happened, into my core."

Mr Zmyslowski previously worked for an online travel agency, dealing with "a lot of hotels... that's my area of expertise".

He told PA his foundation is hoping to raise about £200,000, allowing for the hotel in Sypniewo to provide accommodation, food, education for children, and medical and psychological assistance.

The foundation hopes to provide group therapies and support PTSD treatment at the Centrum Wypoczynkowo hotel, and is looking for nurses and psychologists who speak Ukrainian.

More than 2.5 million people have fled Ukraine since Russia invaded, the [*United Nations*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/united-nations) high commissioner for refugees, Filippo Grandi, said on Friday.

About 1.5 million are believed to have fled to Poland.

For more information and to access the fundraiser, visit: maya-foundation.com/lets-create-a-home-for-500-mothers-and-children-from-ukraine-together/.

**Load-Date:** March 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Davey accuses Government of lack of support for Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650S-STJ1-DY4H-K3M8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 15, 2022 Tuesday 6:58 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 459 words

**Byline:** Gavin Cordon

**Highlight:** The Lib Dem leader challenged Boris Johnson to travel to the region to see for himself the plight of people fleeing the conflict.

**Body**

Liberal Democrat leader Sir [*Ed Davey*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ed-davey) has accused the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) of a "shocking" lack of support for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** trying to reach the UK.

Speaking during a visit to the [*Polish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/polish) border, Sir Ed said that, unlike other European countries, the British Government did not have people on the ground offering assistance to those wanting to come.

He urged Prime Minister [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) to travel to the region to see for himself the plight of "traumatised and exhausted" people desperate to reach safety.

"Boris Johnson should come here, see these people with his own eyes, look them in the face and say 'I apologise for being so unwelcoming for so long'," he said in a telephone interview with the PA news agency.

Our Government is so wrong. They are pretending they are doing something and they really aren't

Sir Ed Davey

"Our Government is so wrong. It is just a hopeless way of going about it. They are pretending they are doing something and they really aren't."

Sir Ed was speaking from the Polish town of Przemysl - close to one of the main crossing points from Ukraine - where he described the situation as "organised chaos".

A disused Tesco had been repurposed by the Poles as a humanitarian centre, while he said other European countries had set up makeshift outposts in nearby empty shops offering the refugees assistance with their onward journeys.

However, he said there was nothing comparable from the UK, with the result that people were being put off from even trying to get there as it was seen as too difficult and too expensive.

The Government isn't prepared to do the necessary for people who do want to come. It is just shocking

Sir Ed Davey

"The message from Priti Patel and Boris Johnson - 'You can come if you have got a relative, but don't bother otherwise' - I'm afraid people have heard that and people who might have come to the UK think they should go elsewhere," the [*Lib Dem*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lib-dem) leader said.

"Our reputation, in terms of humanitarian aid at least, is not a good one here. We should have British people here who can say 'If you want to come to the UK we will make it happen for you.'"

Sir Ed said that even the Government's new scheme announced on Monday to enable the public to open their homes to Ukrainians fleeing the fighting was too complicated and too bureaucratic.

"How are you supposed to meet people on social media? These are people who are traumatised, they are exhausted, they are emotional," he said.

"Sometimes they left in such a hurry they didn't even bring all their paperwork, apparently they have got to find a British contact somehow. Nonsense.

"We should be here saying if you want to come this is how we will do it for you. The Government isn't prepared to do the necessary for people who do want to come. It is just shocking."

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Three welcome hubs for Ukrainian refugees set up in Scotland*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652N-NW31-DY4H-K2C2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 24, 2022 Thursday 1:09 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 538 words

**Byline:** Neil Pooran

**Highlight:** Europe Minister Neil Gray said Scotland would be their home 'for as they long as they need it to be'.

**Body**

Three welcome hubs have been set up around [*Scotland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scotland) for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving in the country.

[*Scottish Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scottish-government) minister, Neil Gray, said Scotland would be their home "for as they long as they need it to be".

The hubs in [*Glasgow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/glasgow) , [*Edinburgh*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/edinburgh) and Cairnryan, will provide hot meals, translation services and trauma support for those who have just arrived.

However, Mr Gray said the Scottish Government does not currently know how many refugees have arrived in Scotland under its "super-sponsor" scheme or by other means, as data-sharing arrangements with the UK Government had not started yet.

Mr Gray, the minister with special responsibility for refugees arriving from Ukraine, spoke to Holyrood's Constitution Committee on Thursday.

He said: "We have chosen to act as a super-sponsor to short circuit the matching process and enable significant numbers of displaced Ukrainians to come to Scotland without unnecessary delay.

"To prepare for that we have established welcome hubs to support displaced Ukrainians arriving into Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Cairnryan - where all those who need it will find safe and comfortable accommodation and a hot meal, and where local partnerships are already in place to make an assessment of need for additional services."

He said the Government was working "flat out" to secure temporary and longer-term accommodation for those who need it.

Getting the system up and running has taken time

Neil Gray, Europe Minister

Mr Gray added: "As the First Minister said at the weekend, we will treat people with compassion, dignity and respect and Scotland will be their home for as they long as they need it to be."

Conservative MSP, Donald Cameron, asked him about the number of refugees who had arrived in Scotland since the super-sponsor scheme opened last week.

Mr Gray said he did not know the number and added: "The data flows have not started as the way that we would want them to start as yet. We haven't got information in place.

"I don't believe that is because UK Government is holding it back from us.

"I just believe that the speed at which the system has been created - from First Minister's conception on one Friday to launch the following Friday - getting the system up and running has taken time."

A majority of those arriving so far were not doing so through the super-sponsor route, he said.

Earlier, the committee heard from a number of charities which work with refugees.

Andy Sirel, legal director of JustRight Scotland, said the UK's visa-based schemes were "long, bureaucratic and fundamentally insufficient".

The latest data showed that showed that out of 66,000 applications for the Ukrainian visa schemes, 15,800 visas had been granted, he said.

This amounts to just 0.4% of those who have fled Ukraine since the Russian invasion on February 24, he added.

He said: "Most importantly, the eligibility criteria that (the schemes) have are quite strict.

"They do not capture individuals who are already in the UK for example, in precarious situations and who are concerned about their family members."

Graham O'Neill, of the Scottish Refugee Council, said: "People are being traumatised by that visa-based response, as we're seeing in the horror stories of delay across [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) and elsewhere."

**Load-Date:** March 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Just 1,200 Ukrainian refugees in UK homes under sponsorship scheme as 71% of applicants still waiting*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:655V-RMG1-DY4H-K4T1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 8, 2022 Friday 11:29 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:5

**Length:** 1014 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Ministers accused of 'squandering' generosity of British public with 'needless bureaucracy and delays'

**Body**

Less than 3 per cent of Ukrainians who have applied to come to Britain under the Homes for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) scheme have arrived in the UK since the route opened three weeks ago, new figures show.

Ministers have been accused of "squandering" the generosity of the British public with "needless bureaucracy and delays" after government data revealed just 1,200 [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) have arrived under the scheme and more than 70 per cent are still waiting for a decision.

Around 200,000 people in the UK have registered to host ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** under the route, but complex applications forms, difficulty finding matches and lengthy delays are slowing down the process.

The new figures show that 43,600 applications have been made to the Ukraine sponsorship scheme, of which 12,500 have led to visas being issued, while just 1,200 people have arrived in the UK.

Shadow home secretary [*Yvette Cooper*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/yvette-cooper) said: "This is scandalous and shameful. Over thirty thousand people with British sponsors waiting are still stuck in limbo -around half of whom have been waiting more than ten days already to hear anything.

The Independent is raising money for the people of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) - if you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

"A shocking 70 per cent of Homes for Ukraine applications are still waiting for a visa. Behind these numbers are many desperate mothers and children in temporary accommodation or still sheltering in Ukraine.

"Where is the home secretary? She needs to stop hiding and account for this national disgrace. British families have offered Ukrainians sanctuary in their hour of need, but the home secretary is letting everyone down."

It comes as[*Priti Patel said she apologised "with frustration"*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/priti-patel-apology-ukraine-refugees-b2053883.html) about the time it is taking for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to arrive in the UK under the two visa schemes.

In a pre-recorded interview with the BBC, which aired on Friday, she said: "I apologise with frustration myself ... it takes time to start up a new route."

However, Ms Patel denied claims that the visa requirements are causing unnecessary delays, insisting the UK will "absolutely see changes in numbers" as work continues.

She said it was "always easy to blame someone else" - but insisted that security checks "are not the problem" when it comes to the time it is taking for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to reach the UK.

Responding to the latest figures, leader of the Liberal Democrats Ed Davey MP said: "Tens of thousands of British families have offered to open their homes to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, but the government is squandering their amazing generosity with needless bureaucracy and delays.

"It is appalling that such a tiny number of refugees have been allowed into the UK, more than a month after the home secretary announced this scheme. This is a humanitarian emergency, but Priti Patel is putting paperwork before people."

In once case, Lauren, an NHS nurse living in Devon, applied for a sponsorship visa on the day the Homes for Ukraine scheme opened on 18 March, but has heard nothing since, and the family she is trying to sponsor remain in limbo in Poland.

"The stressful, emotional impact that this government is causing to people like me that are trying to help families fleeing war is horrendous. Why are the government not helping me to help others? They are causing me and so many other potential hosts real distress," she said.

Enver Solomon, chief executive of Refugee Council, accused ministers of "choosing control over compassion" when it comes to granting refugees protection, adding that the visa schemes were "unfit for purpose".

"Asking Ukrainian families, who are scared, exhausted, and traumatised to fill out a long, and complex visa application is unacceptable and totally out of touch with the terrifying situation they find themselves in," he added.

"The British public stepped forward in their tens of thousands to welcome Ukrainians into their homes, yet we are hearing they have been left feeling angry and frustrated that their gesture of support has been lost into a web of bureaucracy and chaos."

Alex Fraser, of the British Red Cross, urged the UK government to temporarily lift visa requirements so more people can reach the UK quickly and safely.

"Complicated visa schemes have delayed or deterred many people from seeking safety in the UK [...] In our view, the quickest way to help people right now is for the UK Government to stop the need for visas for those fleeing Ukraine. This would also bring the UK in line with a great many other countries who have been doing this since the start of the crisis.

"Security checks would still happen on arrival, but this would free up the capacity of the authorities to help people as they arrive, instead of wading through visa applications."

The Home Office has said there are "various reasons" why Ukrainians are waiting before travelling to the UK, with some having applied for visas so they have the option of travelling to the UK but are currently staying in countries near the border so they can get back to Ukraine sooner.

A government spokesperson said: "In response to Putin's barbaric invasion we have launched one of the fastest and biggest visa schemes in UK history. In just four weeks, over 40,000 visas have been issued so people can rebuild their lives in the UK."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** April 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'Concerning increase' in Ukrainian refugees becoming homeless after UK arrival*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:655W-7J51-JBNF-W3KR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 8, 2022 Friday 1:59 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:3

**Length:** 886 words

**Byline:** Jemma Crew

**Highlight:** Some family sponsors are unable or unwilling to accommodate arrivals, while dozens of matches under the Homes for Ukraine scheme have fallen through.

**Body**

Councils are seeing a "concerning increase" in ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving in the UK and becoming homeless due to relationship breakdowns with their sponsors and problems accessing accommodation.

Ukrainian families who arrived under the family visa scheme are struggling to access cash while they wait for benefits, and some are being put in hotels because their relative is unable or unwilling to house them.

And dozens of matches under the separate [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine scheme are understood to have broken down, with local authorities having to put families in emergency accommodation while they wait to find a new sponsor.

Councils are calling for a way to get refugees whose matches have broken down back on the database so that they can be matched quickly with sponsors in the local area who have homes ready and waiting.

New arrivals should be able to be rematched with a different sponsor if a sponsorship breaks down to ensure families can swiftly move to other accommodation so they can rebuild their lives in their new communities

James Jamieson, of the LGA

They are also exploring with the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) the possibility of matching people who cannot stay with their family sponsor with sponsors registered under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

The chairman of the [*Local Government Association*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/local-government-association) (LGA), councillor James Jamieson, said councils need to be told in advance who is arriving under the family scheme and given funding so they can support them.

He said: "Clarity also remains needed on safeguarding and housing checks under the Homes for Ukraine scheme and councils need clearer guidance on the next steps if the accommodation and safeguarding checks find a match that is not suitable and when sponsor arrangements break down or simply end.

"Councils are already seeing a concerning increase in homelessness presentations from Ukraine arrivals - including those who have arrived via the family scheme and where the families' accommodation is not suitable or the relationship has broken down shortly after arrival - and lone children arriving in the UK needing support.

"New arrivals should be able to be rematched with a different sponsor if a sponsorship breaks down to ensure families can swiftly move to other accommodation so they can rebuild their lives in their new communities."

In a survey published last week, the LGA said 57 councils have been approached by a total of 144 Ukrainian households who have become homeless after arriving under both schemes.

The [*British Red Cross*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british-red-cross) said it has had to refer people to homelessness charities, local authorities and housing associations due to problems getting funds or accommodation.

In some cases it has had to fund short-term accommodation itself as an emergency measure.

Its support line has been contacted by people who are struggling to access cash while they wait for universal credit payments.

The charity says more must be done to tackle these "basic problems".

In one case, a mother and her five children were put up in a hotel by a council after arriving under the family visa scheme.

They are struggling to set up a bank account without proof of address, and without a bank account they cannot complete an application for universal credit.

We're seeing an increasing number of calls to our support line from Ukrainians struggling to get cash and housing, and British families desperate to help but being prevented by the system

Alex Fraser, of the British Red Cross

They were advised to go to their local Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) office in person, but this is at least three miles away and would take nearly an hour to reach by foot as they do not have money for public transport.

When they arrived, the [*DWP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dwp) suggested the younger children wait outside during the appointment, but the charity said staff supporting the family were able to stop this from happening.

Alex Fraser, British Red Cross director of refugee support and restoring family links, said: "We're increasingly concerned about the access to information about support people are receiving when they arrive.

"We're seeing an increasing number of calls to our support line from Ukrainians struggling to get cash and housing, and British families desperate to help but being prevented by the system."

The PA news agency asked the Government if it is aware of the total number of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** currently in emergency accommodation, but it did not provide a figure.

It also did not respond to requests for information about what it is doing to ensure refugees whose matches have broken down can be rematched rapidly so they do not spend weeks in hotels.

Officials are said to be urgently looking into cases of homelessness that have been flagged, and working with local leaders and other Government departments to better understand the costs councils will incur to support arrivals.

A Government spokeswoman said: "Everyone coming to the UK under the Homes for Ukraine and Ukraine Family Scheme will have access to healthcare, education, benefits and job support on the same footing as UK nationals.

"These schemes are designed to ensure people who are coming to the UK fleeing the Russian invasion of Ukraine are provided with accommodation by their family or sponsor.

"Under both schemes councils have a duty to provide support, including where someone is left without accommodation."

**Load-Date:** April 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Labour would still require biometric checks for Ukrainian refugees to come to Britain, Ed Miliband says*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YN-K471-JBNF-W06N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 10, 2022 Thursday 10:24 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 696 words

**Byline:** Jon Stone

**Highlight:** Opposition resists pushing government towards EU-style open door policy

**Body**

[*Labour*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/labour) would still require ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) to undergo biometric and security checks prior to getting an emergency visa to come to Britain, a senior shadow cabinet member has said.

Speaking on Thursday morning [*Ed Miliband*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ed-miliband) said in government his party would be issuing "emergency protection visas" for people fleeing the Russian invasion.

He criticised the government's approach, which he said was not generous enough and turning too many people away.

But the shadow energy secretary said Labour would not follow the EU's 27 member states and drop the requirement for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to get a visa.

Asked what the difference was between Labour's proposed emergency protection visas and an EU-style dropping of visa requirements, Mr Miliband told BBC Radio 4's Today programme:

"You still have biometrics and security checks on people on the basis of this emergency protection visa."

The party says the visa would be simpler and quicker than the existing proces, which has seen Ukrainians stuck in Calais or queueing in freezing temperatures at application centres. It was put to Mr Miliband that the checks would slow down the process and that it could take weeks to process even the existing 22,000 applications.

He replied: "It won't take weeks and if the government really threw everything at this, we could lift normal visa conditions other than biometrics and security checks and people could then come here.

"We've looked into this in great detail, it can absolutely be done but the government needs to get on with it and get its act together."

Asked who had told Labour it could be done quickly, Mr Miliband replied that the party had "looked at this in detail" and talked to "various experts".

"What we said that we should have an emergency visa, a 12 month emergency visa for people so that they can they can come in and we can take our fair share of refugees. It is a visa system, and the checks can be done very quickly," he said

"Frankly what we are seeing - and this is across all sides of the House of Commons, a feeling about this - is a sense that there is just no proper system in place.

"And people being turned away, appalling stories about what people are facing, the government needs to get his act together. It needs to provide the humanitarian help for people that I think the country really wants to see."

Britain has stood out among European countries in not offering an open door policy to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** - with the government coming in for international criticism.

At the start of the week French interior minister Gerald Darmanin, wrote a strongly-worded letter to his British counterpart Priti Patel, accusing the UK of a "lack of humanity" for not opening its doors,

Under current rules the government has merely slightly relaxed existing visa requirements for people with family or sponsors. It has promised to open up further safe routes but yet given any details.

The latest official stats suggested 300 Ukrainians have been granted visas to come to Britain - dwarfed by the two million who have actually fled the country.

Poland hosts 1.2 million and Britain's neighbour Ireland has taken 2,000 people so far, with its government saying it expects to take between 80,000 and 100,000 people in total.

The European Union has activated a special law which will allow all people fleeing the conflict to access housing and other public services for an initial period of three years. Under the rule, people will not be asked to apply for asylum or visas.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees facing 'real destitution' in UK*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:654R-NPB1-JCS0-D3V0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

April 3, 2022 Sunday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 3

**Length:** 1306 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

Ministers are being urged to remove "needless bureaucracy" from the UK's refugee schemes for Ukrainians as it emerged those who have fled war are now facing destitution in Britain. Calls are mounting for the government to allow refugees to apply to the Homes for Ukraine scheme from within the UK, and to provide local authorities with funding for Ukrainians arriving under the family scheme, for which there is currently no support.

It has emerged that many of those who have arrived in recent weeks, both under the Home Office's family scheme and those without visas, are struggling to access housing, as well as having difficulties finding work, claiming benefits and getting their children into schools. Some have inadvertently ended up in the UK asylum system, meaning they are denied the right to work and given little or no support money. Others had intended to stay with family but found that their relatives do not have space to house them, and had to register as homeless.

The Independentrevealed yesterday that the Home Office has shut down parts of its ordinary immigration and visa system - reallocating resources to deal with its bureaucratic Ukraine scheme. Travellers report that priority and super-priority visas are not currently available and ministers have apologised for "any inconvenience caused". Standard visas from elsewhere are also subject to delays.

Despite the fact that 200,000 people in Britain have offered to host Ukrainians under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, a rule preventing refugees from applying once they are in the UK means they cannot benefit from these offers, with councils and charities instead "scrambling" to house and support them.

The Independent's Refugees Welcome campaign is calling for the government to go further and faster to help Ukrainians fleeing the war, with more than 183,000 people signing our petition asking ministers to provide more supplies of food, clothing and shelter for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and to do more to make the UK a safe haven for them.

Shadow levelling up secretary Lisa Nandy accused ministers of "wasting the amazing generosity" of people who have offered to open their homes to refugees, and called the inability to move between the schemes "needlessly bureaucratic".

"If people are already here and need a home, they should be eligible to match up with someone who has offered their home under the sponsorship scheme, especially given how many offers of sponsorship are currently going to waste," she told The Independent. "Councils, charities and ordinary people have stepped up in Ukraine's hour of need. They urgently need more information and support."

Tim Naor Hilton, chief executive of Refugee Action, said the fact that Ukrainians arriving under the family visa scheme were falling into homelessness and destitution "completely undermines the protection this government says it is offering to those fleeing Russian bombs". He said the "simple solution" was to urgently allow Ukrainians already in the UK to apply for the Homes for Ukraine scheme, which would "immediately open up funding to local authorities to support ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** that need it".

Leyla Williams, deputy director of West London Welcome, said the small charity had been approached by around 10 Ukrainian families in the last fortnight who were struggling to access housing or other basic support. She described the case of a family who had arrived on the family visa scheme but whose relative was a disabled woman with very little money, meaning they weren't able to live with her. The charity has placed them with a host informally.

"We've got a number of families in that situation appealing to us for help. Not all families are going to have the means to support their relatives. Communities are scrambling to help these people. This work isn't formally funded by anyone. The government isn't helping," she said. "We are happy as a charity to support people, but it shouldn't be the role of a small charity to support traumatised and bewildered Ukrainians families and their hosts. They are being supported in a totally different way to those coming through the Homes for Ukraine scheme."

Ms Williams said the "only way" to prevent Ukrainians from becoming homeless and falling into "real destitution" was to allow them to apply to the sponsorship scheme from within the UK. "They need that state support to ensure that people can meet their essential needs as soon as they get here. Everybody is escaping the same war," she added.

Figures released by the Local Government Association (LGA) this week revealed that at least 144 newly arrived Ukrainian households had presented as homeless since the start of the war, of whom 44 arrived under the family scheme, 36 under the Homes for Ukraine scheme and 64 whose status is unknown. Fewer than two-thirds of all councils responded to the survey, so the true figure is likely to be higher.

Oleksandr Polishchuk, a volunteer at Support Ukraine, a charity in London, said it was helping dozens of refugees who were struggling to access basic services on arrival to Britain. "In many cases they don't have cash, they don't speak English. It's complicated. Sometimes they need housing, they need clothing. In most cases they've come with a bag, but not much," he said.

"Some need medication and they don't know where to get it from. People are struggling to get their kids into schools. They don't know how to apply for benefits. The language barrier is huge. The government isn't offering support with this. It introduced a policy and left it to local authorities to implement it. We're identifying the breakages and working with the councils to fix them, but each council is different, some are less advanced."

He called on the government to enable people already in the UK to switch to the sponsorship scheme: "There are tons of people who will take them. This is a nation which gave the Kindertransport. We're in that situation. There are so many people who want to help. "Ukrainians don't want to be a burden. They didn't come here to be on benefits. They want to work, they want to earn their keep. A lot of people would apply to the sponsorship scheme if they could."

Local authorities are given £10,500 in central government funding for each refugee under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, but receive no money for those arriving under the family scheme, which allows Ukrainian refugeesto join UK-based relatives.

A spokesperson for the LGA said that while councils "stand ready" to support communities aiding those fleeing the war and help new arrivals settle in the UK, they require more funding to be able to do this. "We are calling for councils to receive funding to support new arrivals coming under the family visa scheme, who will still need access to local services, so they can support them when they are here in both the short and long term," the spokesperson said.

A government spokesperson said: "Everyone coming to the UK under the Homes for Ukraine and Ukraine family scheme will have access to healthcare, education, benefits and job support on the same footing as UK nationals. These schemes are designed to ensure people who are coming to the UK fleeing the Russian invasion are provided with accommodation by their family or sponsor, and are only open to those applying from outside of the UK."

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**Load-Date:** April 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*US to take 100,000 Ukrainian refugees amid criticism it has not done enough*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652N-VM51-DY4H-K1KH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 24, 2022 Thursday 2:04 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:3

**Length:** 373 words

**Byline:** Andrew Feinberg

**Highlight:** Mr Biden is expected to make the announcement in Brussels

**Body**

President Joe Biden is expected to announce plans for the US to accept 100,000 Ukrainian and other refugees who've fled their homes to escape Russia's unprovoked invasion.

According to the United Nations, more than 3 million Ukrainians - including half the country's children - have left since Russian president Vladimir Putin ordered his forces to invade one month ago.

Mr Biden is expected to make the announcement on Thursday from Brussels, Belgium, [*where he has traveled to attend an extraordinary Nato summit and meet with the European Council to discuss the West's response to the ongoing crisis.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/biden-news-today-nato-russia-europe-b2042791.html%22%20title=%22Biden%20news%20-%20live:%20President%20arrives%20at%20Nato%20summit%20as%20US%20'plans%20to%20receive%20100,000%20refugees')

A decision to accept such a large number of refugees would be one of the largest influxes of refugees into the US in recent years, and would come after criticism that Mr Biden and the United States have not done enough to absorb the massive flow of persons who've been displaced by Russian forces over the last four weeks.

On 12 March, Polish president Andrzej Duda called on the US to "speed up" the processing of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have relatives already living in the US during a joint appearance with Vice President Kamala Harris.

According to US census data, more than 350,000 Ukrainian immigrants currently reside in the United States.

At the time, Mr Duda said the crisis would "end up in a refugee disaster" if the US did not act swiftly.

But despite promises from Mr Biden to welcome refugees with open arms, his administration has not taken the sorts of public steps that would signal openness to a large flow of displaced persons.

Instead, Biden Administration officials have stressed that the US response to the crisis thus far has been to support efforts by Poland and other neighbouring countries to accept refugees who cross from Ukraine via land borders.

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**Load-Date:** March 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*People offering spare rooms to Ukrainian refugees say information is unclear*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650B-G991-JBNF-W0N5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 13, 2022 Sunday 4:53 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 405 words

**Byline:** Lottie Kilraine

**Highlight:** Shaun Herlihy said he would be willing to house a family for 'as long as it takes' but said he does not 'know where to start'.

**Body**

[*People*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/people) across Britain have been offering their spare bedrooms to refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine, despite concerns at the lack of information on how to help.

Shaun Herlihy, 52, from Rhymney, in south Wales, said he would be willing to house a family for "as long as it takes" but added he does not "know where to start".

"I've got a spare room and I have the capability so I'd be more than happy to help out in any way I can," he told the PA news agency.

"I just don't like seeing anyone suffering, especially innocent children.

"I have a big spare bedroom and they would have access to a shower, washing machine, fridge, TV and food in the cupboard, everything they would need really.

"I am prepared to do all the checks, psychological or police checks, whatever it takes."

The [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) has given details of a new scheme that could give people offering accommodation to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** a "thank you" payment of £350 per month.

The Homes for Ukraine programme, to be rolled out this week, will allow individuals, charities, community groups and businesses to bring people escaping the war to safety - even if they have no ties to the UK.

I've got a spare room and I have the capability so I'd be more than happy to help out in any way I can

Shaun Herlihy

Mr Herlihy said he is finding it hard to find clear information on how to offer his home.

He said the idea of an extra £350 per month would be "welcome" but said he is willing to cover the costs of housing a family without it.

"I think people would be willing to offer their homes regardless, but the extra money would be helpful," he said.

"I have posted on [*Twitter*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/twitter) saying I am happy to help, hopefully someone will see that, whether it is a family in Ukraine or someone who needs help.

"They are welcome to come and stay with me whether the Government likes it or not, it's my flat and I pay for it and I want to help."

Meanwhile, [*Adam*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/adam) , 38, who did not give his last name, from Folkestone, Kent, criticised the Government response for being too slow.

He told PA: "It seems to me a bodged operation, the Government knew [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) was going to invade weeks before it did.

"I can't do nothing, so I'm opening up my house and will welcome them in.

"£350 a month is a nice gesture, but that works out at just over £10 a day and there is not enough information out there on how it will work.

"Anyway, I am looking forward to meeting my new housemate/s and perhaps learning some Ukrainian."

**Load-Date:** March 13, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Charles holds 'emotional' meeting with Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65B5-B401-DY4H-K4G0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 28, 2022 Thursday 5:26 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 297 words

**Byline:** Benedict Smith

**Highlight:** The Prince of Wales visited the World Jewish Relief charity in north London.

**Body**

The [*Prince of Wales*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-wales) has said that he hopes [*Britain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britain) is welcoming to Ukrainians in an "emotional" meeting with families who have fled Vladimir Putin's invasion.

[*Charles*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/charles) , who is believed to have personally suggested meeting refugees from Ukraine, added that he was praying for the conflict to end quickly.

He made the comments on a visit to the World Jewish Relief (WJR) charity in north [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london) , which has sent food, money and medicine to the war-torn country.

Charles, a patron of the group since 2015, has made a financial contribution to its efforts although the sum has not been made public.

WJR chairman Maurice Helfgott told the prince he would be writing a letter to thank him for the donation. "Don't bother with that," responded the prince, to laughter from the room.

After speaking to the team responsible for settling refugees in the UK, Charles met three Ukrainian women who had fled the war, all of whom have asked not to be named.

Two were from Kharkiv, in the north east of Ukraine, while the other was from [*Odessa*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/odessa) in the south. Both cities have been heavily bombed by Russian forces.

"Till the day I die, I will never forget the sound of missiles," one of the women said.

A relative of the women from Kharkiv described how she had managed to convince them to leave their home, taking their cat and a handful of family photographs, and head to Britain.

"They stayed in Poland, in one of the Jewish community centres," she told Charles.

"Then my husband literally had to fly to Poland to help them because they don't speak English."

One witness said that the prince appeared to be "very emotional about the whole thing".

The woman from Odessa called Charles a "righteous Gentile" - a term meaning a non-Jewish person.

"The Royal Family tried to save people," she added. "Thank you."

**Load-Date:** April 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Russian oligarchs' UK homes could be seized and used to house Ukrainian refugees, Raab says*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XC-KJM1-JBNF-W537-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 4, 2022 Friday 9:42 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:3

**Length:** 593 words

**Byline:** Jon Stone

**Highlight:** Deputy prime minister says government was looking to seize UK property belonging to Kremlin-linked elite

**Body**

The London properties of Russian elites could be confiscated and used to house ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) , the deputy prime minister has said.

[*Dominic Raab*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dominic-raab) was asked whether the British government could confiscate property owned by [*oligarchs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/oligarchs) with Kremlin links as part of the sanctions process against Russia.

Mr Raab told LCB radio: "Yeah, if we've got the evidence and the legal basis, then we'll do it."

Further pressed on whether those properties could be used to house house ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, he said: "Yes, absolutely.

"We are looking at everything in the round, it is a team effort across government, from the foreign and defence secretary through to Michael Gove and, of course, the Prime Minister is driving this very hard."

The move has been pushed for by opposition party the Liberal Democrats and reportedly argued for in the Cabinet by housing secretary Michael Gove.

The UK government has however faced criticism for being slower and weaker on sanctions against Kremlin-linked Russians in light of the invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

But Mr Raab rejected the criticism and claimed Britain was "at the vanguard" of the crackdown.

Asked during interviews with broadcasters why the European Union had sanctioned more individual Russian elites than Britain, Mr Raab replied:

"There has been a running commentary that the UK has somehow been slow -we've not been slow.

"We've been at the vanguard of taking action and, of course, what is really important is we act in concert with our allies, European, American and other Nato allies.

"For example, we have sanctioned more Russian banks than the EU, including Sberbank, which is the biggest Russian bank. We've made it clear and introduced measures so that three million Russian companies cannot raise loans or get listed on the UK stock market.

"These measures -and each country has slightly different sanctions regimes -are all aimed at tightening the noose, if you like, and starving off the finance that is going into Putin's war machine."

The UK overnight sanctioned two more Russian oligarchs, Alisher Usmanov and Igor Shuvalov. Under the restrictions, the pair's assets have been frozen and they will be banned from travelling to Britain, while UK citizens and businesses will not be allowed to deal with them.

Announcing the measures, Boris Johnson said he wanted to "inflict maximum economic pain on Putin and his war machine".

But Labour chair Anneliese Dodds said the UK government had to stop "dragging" its feet on the sanctions process.

"I certainly would say that we have been far too soft, especially over the last 10 years, on those funds that have come from Putin-linked oligarchs and business people," she told Sky News.

"I have got to say that, for many, many years, Labour has been calling on the Conservatives to, for example, force transparency around property ownership, especially in London where we know that many of these Putin-linked oligarchs have been stashing their funds in property.

"We see, even with the new measures that finally have been extracted from the Government now that they say they will announce on Monday, an 18-month window before they will come into action -that's just not good enough."

The Labour chair called for "immediate action now", adding: "We can put those registers of foreign-owned property into place in 28 days, we believe we could get those running and force that transparency.

"We should have had it many years ago but, above all, we need it right now. We have got to act right now and we have got to stop dragging our feet as the Conservative Government has been doing."

**Load-Date:** March 4, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UK sponsorship scheme for Ukrainian refugees branded 'DIY assignment'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650N-V8X1-DY4H-K016-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 15, 2022 Tuesday 12:14 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 1115 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Labour warns refugees will still be required confront 'excessive bureaucracy' before coming to Britain

**Body**

The UK's new sponsorship scheme for ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) has been branded a "DIY assignment scheme" by opposition MPs after it emerged that the government would play no role in matching refugees to hosts and that [*visas*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/visas) would still be required.

Announcing the[*scheme*](https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk/) in the House of Commons on Monday, Levelling Up secretary [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) said it would allow Ukrainians with no family links to come to the UK and benefit from three years of "unrestricted access" to benefits, employment and health care.

He confirmed media reports over the weekend that the sponsorship programme would offer those who provide a home for [*refugees*](https://indy-web-prod.brightsites.co.uk/topic/refugees) a monthly payment of £350, adding there would be "no limit" to the number of Ukrainian's who can benefit from the scheme.

But MPs expressed concern about the "excessive bureaucracy" the scheme entailed, given refugees are still required to apply for a visa. Those with passports will be able to do so through an online application process, but it is unclear how long the processing times will be.

There was also alarm at the process for matching hosts with refugees, which requires sponsors to identify a refugee individual or family and nominate them to stay with them in their home or in a separate property.

Shadow Levelling up minister Lisa Nandy said: "[Mr Gove] can't seriously be asking Ukrainian families who are fleeing Vladimir Putin, who have left their homes with nothing, to get onto Instagram and advertise themselves in the hope that a British family might notice them.

"Is this genuinely the extent of this scheme? Surely there's a role for the secretary of state in matching Ukrainian families to their sponsors, not just a DIY assignment scheme where all he does is take the credit."

The Independent is raising money for the people of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) - if you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

It comes after charities [*told The Independent*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-sponsorship-name-uk-b2035310.html) that the policy of hosts having to put forward names of refugees could leave Ukrainians who are vulnerable and do not have links to the UK or access to social media "excluded" from the programme.

Ms Nandy also accused the government of creating a "press release" as opposed to a "plan", adding that Labour was "deeply concerned about the lack of urgency".

"[Mr Gove]'s just told us they will still need a visa under the current application process. These are 50-page forms that have to be completed online, asking people who have fled with nothing to find an internet café to upload documents they don't' have - water bills, mortgage documents - to prove who they are," she added.

"We are lagging way behind the generosity of other countries. We could simplify this process today, we could keep essential checks but drop the excessive bureaucracy."

SNP MP Stuart McDonald echoed her concerns, saying: "We do very much regret that things are still not going fast enough, and we will still continue to argue that the best response from government is to stop asking Ukrainians to apply for visas.

"Why are people on this scheme still going to have to apply for a visa? Yes some may now be able to apply online, but an online process is not necessarily a fast process either."

Mr Gove said Ukrainians with a valid passport would have their applications turned around "within 24 hours", adding: "We are working as quickly as possible to ensure that individuals in need can be found the families and sponsors whom they need in order to get people into this country as soon as possible."

Moments after the Levelling Up minister announced that the website enabling people to register their interest in housing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** had been launched on Monday afternoon, [*the website crashed*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/homes-for-ukraine-refugees-government-sponsor-b2035528.html).

A number of MPs, including Tory MP Caroline Nokes, questioned the level of vetting that would take place before refugees are placed in people's homes, citing concerns about potential abuse and exploitation that could take place.

Mr Gove said: "We don't believe we need full DBS checks to make sure someone is an appropriate sponsor. It will often be the case that very light touch criminal checks will be sufficient and the local authority can be supported to make sure people are safe."

When asked what would happen if a placement breaks down, Mr Gove said that in such cases the support of central and local government would be mobilised "to ensure people can move on".

It comes after anti-trafficking charities [*warned on Monday*](https://indy-web-prod.brightsites.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-modern-slavery-exploitation-sponsorship-uk-b2035384.html) that "red flags could be missed" in the vetting of potential hosts under the new programme, with some people in the UK likely to view the scheme as an "opportunity to turn a profit at the expense of vulnerable individuals".

Mr Gove said sponsors would be required to commit to the scheme for a minimum of six months, but would be encouraged to keep up the offer for as long as they can. They must have leave to remain for at least the next six months to be allowed to sponsor a Ukrainian citizen.

Labour MP for Slough Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi said the government's response to the Ukraine crisis was "quite frankly pathetic", saying it revealed "the extent of the callousness within the government's hostile environment policy".

"The only reason we are having such a statement is because the government has been dragged kicking and screaming by the opposition, the media and the good British people who have said this debacle simply doesn't represent us, we are much better than this," he added.

Mr Gove retorted: "It is an uncapped scheme. I've had it up to here with people trying to suggest this country is not generous. The hostile environment was invented under a Labour home secretary, so could we chuck it when it comes to the partisan nonsense and focus on delivery."

He added: "This scheme is not perfect, but what we are trying to do is make sure we can move as rapidly as possible."

The minister said the government expects to [*welcome the first Ukrainians*](https://inews.co.uk/opinion/editor/uk-government-response-ukraine-refugee-crisis-shameful-1503550?ico=in-line_link) under the new route from next week.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Irish families 'will have to open their homes to Ukrainian refugees'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y1-VCD1-JBNF-W213-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 11:29 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 773 words

**Byline:** Cate McCurry

**Highlight:** Fianna Fail senator Timmy Dooley made the call after travelling to the Ukrainian city of Lviv.

**Body**

[*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) families will have to play their part and open their homes to refugees fleeing Ukraine, Timmy Dooley has said following a brief visit to the war-torn country.

The Fianna Fail senator and MEP Billy Kelleher travelled to the Ukrainian city of [*Lviv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lviv) for talks with political leaders.

Mr Dooley, the vice president of the EU Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (Alde), travelled 100 kilometres from the [*Polish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/polish) border into Ukraine on Sunday.

It is understood they are the first Irish politicians to visit the country since the Russian invasion.

Went at invitation of our political colleagues in the Ukraine.We saw first hand the appalling suffering of people trying to get to European Union. Will ask our Political Parties at European level to request more support for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.Lucinda I hope you will too [*https://t.co/gSSVaGhlys*](https://t.co/gSSVaGhlys) - Billy Kelleher MEP (@BillyKelleherEU) [*March 6, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BillyKelleherEU/status/1500612713231310851?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

The United Nations announced over the weekend that more than 1.5 million people have fled Ukraine.

Mr Dooley said there will be much greater numbers fleeing the country over the coming weeks, and that appeals will have to go out to families across Europe, including [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) , to open their homes.

"I have to say the response that I have gotten from people that have contacted me in the last week, there is a huge willingness by the Irish people to open up their homes and assist these people who are fleeing really a terrible situation," he told RTE.

Mr Dooley said he was invited by the Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky's Servant Of The People's party to visit the country after travelling to the border in Poland.

"What we saw on the other side of the border was a 20km tailback of cars. At one particular point, people standing in a line of about 5km," Mr Dooley added.

"I would say there were people there for probably two days.

"It's an appalling situation when you consider the low temperatures at night, recognising that they're vulnerable people, young families, an absence of men who are back on the warfront, elderly people being pushed on wheelchairs, people with physical disabilities being pushed on wheelchairs."

Mr Dooley said that the processing times of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** needed to be speeded up at the border.

"It really is a humanitarian crisis on the other side. I think from a European perspective, there will have to be a more coordinated effort to get people across the border," he added.

"There's technically an open border in that Ukrainian people are allowed free access to Europe. But the processing on the border leaves a lot to be desired at the moment.

"We have to try and do something to to make that easier for those that are fleeing the bombs of Russia."

The Fianna Fail senator said he spoke to Ukrainian deputy prime minister Iryna Vereshchuk last week.

"Our initial mission was to go to the border but we were invited then to travel to Lviv, which is about 100km east of the Polish border.

We had sought the advice of those that invited us and their best advice was that it was safe to travel to Lviv

Timmy Dooley

"They wanted us to see the situation first hand and we certainly did that. We'll be reporting back to our respective parties across Europe and to those that need to know what we have seen, and the message that we have been given which is to provide greater assistance to the refugees who are finding it difficult to cross the border."

Mr Dooley defended his decision to cross the border into Ukraine against official advice from the Irish Government.

"I accept and recognise that. But I think in the face of such human suffering, it was a calculated risk from our perspective," he added.

"We had sought the advice of those that invited us and their best advice was that it was safe to travel to Lviv, which was about 100km on the other side of the border and was about 600 miles from where there was any shelling activity.

"We are preparing a report which will go to the Alde number parties.

"We'll be passing that message back, which is that at European level, they're very thankful for what's being done to date, but the effort will have to be stepped up, it will have to be easier for those that are fleeing the battlefields.

"It will have to be easier for them to cross the border.

"Obviously then we will have have work to do when the refugees ultimately get to our respective countries.

"Poland is doing well at the moment, managing the numbers that are there."

It comes as Ireland's Minister for Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney travels to New York for a two-day visit.

He is to take part in a Council of Foreign Relations discussion on Europe's response to the events in Ukraine.

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Scout leader helping Ukrainian refugees criticises visa delays as 'abhorrent'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:656Y-8H31-JBNF-W34Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 13, 2022 Wednesday 3:10 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 548 words

**Byline:** Sam Russell

**Highlight:** They are awaiting visas before they can travel to the UK under the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme.

**Body**

A scout leader who took his group's minibus to Ukraine's border with [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) to help transport refugees to safety has described delays in issuing visas as "absolutely abhorrent".

Adam Hale-Sutton, of Little Melton near [*Norwich*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/norwich) , [*Norfolk*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/norfolk) , said he travelled to the border the week that the war in Ukraine started, initially to deliver aid.

The 43-year-old father of two boys, aged nine and 11, has taken a sabbatical from his job at restoration firm Belfor to volunteer.

He estimates that, with the help of other volunteers and charities, he has helped 73 Ukrainian families, who made their way to the Polish border village of Medyka, to get flights to Ireland

Mr Hale-Sutton said that last week Poland "took full control of all the borders" and is now using coaches to take refugees to [*Krakow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/krakow) or Warsaw where they can be processed.

He is currently at a holiday house in Dunkirk in [*France*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/france) , where he has driven in a minibus with six ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, three mothers with their sons, who all have sponsors in England.

They are awaiting visas before they can travel to the UK under the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme.

"We're just waiting now for a green light to come home," he said, adding that they had been in Dunkirk since Sunday.

He said visa applications for five of the six were made on April 5, with the sixth application finalised on Tuesday after the passport was renewed at the Ukrainian embassy in Brussels.

Mr Hale-Sutton described delays in getting UK visas as "abhorrent".

"There's no other word to describe it, absolutely abhorrent," he said.

"It's been made in a way that it appears the British don't want Ukrainian people to come into the country.

"That's how it feels and that's the feeling of every single group member who's come over from England to help me.

"Everyone's devastated.

"We put so much effort in and we're just continuously met with this ridiculous level of bureaucracy."

The six refugees with Mr Hale-Sutton are Larysa Bobor, 54 and her 16-year-old son Bohdan, of Cherniviv in northern Ukraine, Viktoriya Lomakovska, 34, and her 10-year-old son Mykyta, from Kyiv, and Olha Miroshnyk, 37, and her three-year-old son Yan Dmytrykov, from the eastern Ukrainian town of Mariinka.

The scout leader said they all travelled to the Polish border on foot, arriving in late March where he met them.

"They walked, stopping in people's houses that have been shelled, having to go and find another house that's got a toilet in," he said.

"It's that bad.

"They've all walked.

"They may have hitched a lift at some points but there was no public transport per se so they walked."

He continued: "The reason I'm out here is I'm a dad, I've got two boys, I'm a very emotional and passionate person.

"When I saw what was going on I'm one of these people who can't sit still.

"I'm not a talker, I'm a doer.

"My wife was like, I was pacing the house, I couldn't believe what I was seeing, she just said 'I can see what you want to do Adam, go', so I did."

He raised funds through GoFundMe and has also put in some of his own money to help refugees to safety.

"It's all been done with people with big hearts that care," he said.

"I'm prepared to stay out here for as long as I'm needed."

He said spirits of the six refugees with him are "pretty good", adding: "Everyone just wants to get to the final destination."

**Load-Date:** April 13, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Wimbledon gives Ukrainian refugees chance to escape horrors of war*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65V6-CWS1-JBNF-W413-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 3, 2022 Sunday 12:04 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 614 words

**Byline:** Laura Parnaby

**Highlight:** The first two families through the gates of the All England Club in SW19 spoke to the PA news agency.

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** given free tickets to Wimbledon have described it as a chance to escape from the horrors of the war.

One thousand asylum seekers from the country visited the Championships on Middle Sunday, and the first families through the gates of the [*All England Club*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/all-england-club) in SW19 expressed their gratitude.

Seven refugees from two families, all wearing their country’s colours, said they were missing their boyfriends, husbands and fathers in Ukraine, but that supportive events like Wimbledon gave them the “power” to stay strong.

It’s moments like this, at Wimbledon today, that we feel the support

Ukrainian refugee Kateryna Shyian

Kateryna Shyian, 32, fled her home in [*Zaporizhzhia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/zaporizhzhia) in south-eastern Ukraine with her sister, Yuliia, 24, and their mother, [*Nina*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nina) , 59, to a host family home in [*Mitcham*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mitcham) , south London.

She was forced to leave behind her boyfriend, and her father, who had stayed behind to be with his 84-year-old mother, whose reduced mobility meant she could not leave.

Ms Shyian, who has been working as an asset manager at The Rubens luxury hotel in central London, said her father, Mykola, 63, is a tennis fan and she would be thinking of him as she watched on the action on Court No 1.

She told the PA news agency: “I’m very excited about this tennis tournament because my father, he loves it all, and he is always watching on TV, so I feel in touch with it.

“Unfortunately he’s in occupied territory, so now this Championship he will pass.

“It’s really scary because for more than one month we have not had any connection with him.

“But we were saying that in Ukraine, we’re not crying, we’re fighting.”

She said that being at a prestigious tournament while worrying about her family feels like “living two lives”, but the invitation had made her “feel the support” from the UK.

“It’s a really great, big Championship, and it really helps you find the power to help in other ways,” she said.

“For example, all my family now are finding ways to volunteer and support Ukraine, helping people find out how to make documents to come here.

“It’s moments like this, at Wimbledon today, that we feel the support as well.”

She added: “I feel like I’m living two lives.

“On one side, it’s normal life, and the other side is the war, hearing about the rockets and the dangers.”

She said it is “good” that Russian and Belarussian players have been banned from the tournament this year.

Ms Shyian last saw her boyfriend on February 24, and calls him every day.

“I wish I could hug him and feel better,” she said.

Due to this opportunity we can think about something interesting and also not about news from Ukraine

Ukrainian refugee Kateryna Sokol

Kateryna Sokol, a 40-year-old interpreter and English teacher, was at SW19 with her sons, Ivan, 13, and Anton, seven, and her mother, Zinaida, 64.

She had to leave behind her husband, a food factory worker, when they fled Kostiantynivka, in the eastern Donbas region.

Ms Sokol told PA: “We are very glad to be here. We appreciate the amazing opportunity to attend such an amazing event and to be a part of a worldwide tennis competition.

“Due to this opportunity we can think about something interesting and also not about news from Ukraine.”

Speaking about her husband, she said: “We talk every day, I phone him, but it’s difficult for me and for my sons to live in different parts of the world.”

She said Ukrainian players like [*Lesia Tsurenko*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lesia-tsurenko) wearing blue and yellow badges is “very important” because “people all over the world and especially the United Kingdom will see”.

Her son, Ivan, said he enjoys sport, especially ballroom dancing, which he has been able to continue at Wimbledon Dance Academy, and was “very excited” to be at the tournament.

**Load-Date:** July 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees to be offered employment help at famous Dublin cafe*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:654T-2J51-DY4H-K3SY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 3, 2022 Sunday 11:00 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 496 words

**Byline:** Cate McCurry

**Highlight:** The cafe is bringing in interpreters to provide help to new arrivals fleeing the war in their homeland.

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are to be offered employment and training help at a famous [*Dublin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dublin) cafe, which is also putting 'Red Cross Buns' on its menu to aid the humanitarian effort.

Bewley's Cafe in Grafton Street will be selling the pastries in place of its usual hot cross variety until Easter, with all proceeds going to the [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) Red Cross.

Coupled with the fundraising drive, the cafe is bringing in interpreters to provide a practical welcome and employment advice and training service to new arrivals fleeing the war in their homeland, in support of the Irish Red Cross.

Donna O'Leary, general manager at Bewley's, said: "We want the cafe to be a place where people can start their Irish journey, in the same way as so many before them.

"There is a real need for interpreters in the current crisis, and we have established a team of two Ukrainian speakers at the cafe to help to guide people who need an introduction to services or help with employment.

"This is not just about Bewley's - we also want to help to connect people with other potential employers and services.

"We want to work with people to help them get into suitable employment, utilising our vast network as a leader in the coffee industry.

"Within Bewley's we have available roles in our bakery and head office, from entry level positions to skills such as baristas, sales and engineering and we offer internationally recognised training."

Interpreters Oksana Karbiwska and her daughter Kamilia are Ukrainian nationals settled in Ireland, and eager to help their compatriots.

Oksana, 42, who is from [*Lviv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lviv) and left Ukraine when she was 19, said: "We are here to help, to reassure people and to be a friendly face in a new country.

"We are delighted to do something practical as it has been difficult being in Ireland and feeling helpless while our fellow Ukrainians suffered."

We will always continue to reach out the hand of friendship and be a home for new arrivals from all over the world.

Donna O'Leary

The Bewley family came to Ireland as refugees and the business, founded on Quaker principles, has been helping Ireland's new arrivals since 1840.

"We are following in the tradition of Victor Bewley who, in 1956, reached out and employed and trained people who had fled [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) on foot following the uprising - some of whom designed and baked the Cafe's most iconic offerings," said Ms O'Leary.

"We will always continue to reach out the hand of friendship and be a home for new arrivals from all over the world."

The Irish Red Cross has been working with Bewley's to establish practical needs on the ground.

Liam O'Dwyer, secretary general of the Irish Red Cross, said: "This is a good response to the current situation, part fundraising and part practical. There is a real need for displaced people to feel welcomed in their own tongue and to gain access to advice and employment opportunities."

Bewley's Red Cross Buns will retail for 4 euro each, or 20 euro for a box of six, with all proceeds going to the aid agency.

**Load-Date:** April 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*New UK visa centre in Lille will not offer walk-in appointments for Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YG-YNH1-DY4H-K2B2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 9, 2022 Wednesday 6:35 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 618 words

**Byline:** Ashley Cowburn

**Highlight:** Around 1,000 people have been approved for a visa so far, PM says

**Body**

A new pop-up visa centre for ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) in [*Lille*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lille) will not offer walk-in appointments and only be available for referrals, the Home Office has confirmed.

It comes as the government faces intense pressure over its approach to those fleeing the Russian invasion, with [*calls to temporarily suspend bureaucratic visa processes.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-russia-invasion-refugees-visa-uk-b2031832.html)

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) earlier told MPs that 1,000 people had so far been approved a visa - despite tens of thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** with family links to the UK applying.

Since the outbreak of war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , hundreds have arrived in Calais, with many attempting to join their relatives in the UK under the Home Office's family visa scheme.

Yesterday it emerged the [*government would set up a temporary visa centre in Lille*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/russia-ukraine-crisis-refugees-visa-calais-b2031004.html) - some 70 miles away - and in a move that is likely to cause further concern, the department said it would only work on a referral basis.

It is understood officials at the Home Office do not want the facility, which will open on Thursday, to become overwhelmed.

Those without referrals from Border Force officials will still be encouraged to book an appointment at a permanent visa centre in locations such as Paris and Brussels.

A government spokesperson said: "In light of the risk from criminals actively operating in the area around Calais, we have set up a new temporary visa application centre in Lille which will open tomorrow focused on referrals only for people in the area eligible for the scheme."

They added: "The UK stands shoulder-to-shoulder with the people of Ukraine and we have taken urgent action to process visas at speed for all those eligible to the Ukraine Family Scheme, while carrying out vital security checks.

"We have protected appointments at all of our visa application centres to ensure there is sufficient capacity and deployed extra staff to help people through the process as quickly as possible."

On Wednesday police were called to an application centre in southeast Poland - the country where the vast majority of Ukrainians have fled to - in order to calm crowds.

According to the PA news agency, people fleeing the invasion were banging on the centre's windows, as visa staff told the crowds in Rzesvow that they were only able to see to 100 applications per day.

Speaking at the Home Affairs committee on Wednesday, Ukraine's top diplomat in London [*estimated that "at least" 100,000 refugees could come to the UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-russia-invasion-refugees-visa-uk-b2031832.html) , but also urged ministers to drop the visa requirements.

Vadym Prystaiko said he understood the checks required by the British government, but insisted "some bureaucratic procedures could be simplified" and dropping all visa checks could be "considered".

But the prime minister told MPs the visa checks were needed to prevent Vladimir Putin sending agents to the UK.

He said: "We know how unscrupulous Putin can be in his methods, it would not be right to expose this country to unnecessary security risk and we will not do it.

"We are going to be as generous as we can possibly be, but we must have checks."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees speak of bombs, half-empty cities, hunger*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6522-DW01-DY4H-K4N1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 21, 2022 Monday 5:12 PM GMT

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**Length:** 620 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Yulia Bondarieva spent 10 days in a basement as Russian planes flew over and bombs were falling on Kharkiv

**Body**

Yulia Bondarieva spent 10 days in a basement as Russian planes flew over and bombs were falling on the Ukrainian city of [*Kharkiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kharkiv). Having reached safety in Poland, Bondarieva's only wish now is for her twin sister in the besieged city of Mariupol to get out, too.

"They have been in the basement since Feb. 24, they have not been out at all," Bondarieva said. "They are running out of food and water."

Bondarieva managed to speak to her sister on the phone. The fear of what will happen to her in the encircled and bombed-out city that is going through some of the worst fighting in the war has been overwhelming.

"She does not know how to leave the city," the 24-year-old said after arriving at the Polish border town of Medyka.

Mariupol authorities have said only about 10% of the city's population of 430,000 has managed to flee over the past week. The Mariupol City Council has asserted that several thousand residents were taken into Russia against their will.

Bondarieva said her sister told her of "Russian soldiers walking around the city" in Mariupol, and people not being allowed out.

"Civilians cannot leave," she said. "They don't give them anything."

The battle for the strategic port on the [*Azov Sea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/azov-sea) raged on Monday. Russian and Ukrainian soldiers were fighting block-by-block for control of Mariupol, where at least 2,300 people have died, some buried in mass graves.

The United Nations says nearly 3.5 million people have left Ukraine since the start of the Russian invasion on Feb. 24, the largest exodus of refugees in [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) since World War II.

Valentina Ketchena arrived by train at the Polish town of Przemsyl. She never thought that at the age of 70 she would be forced to leave her home in Kriviy Rig, and see the town in southern Ukraine almost deserted as people flee the Russian invasion for safety.

Kriviy Rig is now "half empty," said Ketchena. She will stay now with friends in Poland, hoping to return home soon. "It (is a) very difficult time for everyone."

Zoryana Maksimovich is from the western city of Lviv, near the Polish border. Though the city has seen less destruction than others, Maksimovich said her children are frightened and cried every night when they had to go to the basement for protection.

"I told my children that we are going to visit friends," the 40-year-old said. "They don't understand clearly what is going on but in a few days they are going to ask me about where their father is."

Like most refugees, Maksimovich had to flee without her husband - men aged 18 to 60 are forbidden from leaving the country and have stayed to fight. "I don't know how I will explain," she said.

Once in Poland, refugees can apply for a local ID number that enables them to work and access health, social and other services. Irina Cherkas, 31, from the Poltava region, said she was afraid her children could be targeted in Russian attacks.

"For our children's safety we decided to leave Ukraine," she said. "When the war ends we will go back home immediately."

Poland has taken in most of the ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, more than 2 million so far. On Sunday evening, Ukrainian artists joined their Polish hosts in a charity event that raised more than $380,000.

The star of the evening was a 7-year-old Ukrainian girl, whose video singing a song from the movie "Frozen" in a Kyiv bomb shelter has gone viral and drawn international sympathy.

Wearing a white, embroidered folk dress, Amellia Anisovych, who escaped to Poland with her grandmother and brother, sang the Ukrainian anthem in a clear, sweet voice as thousands of people in the audience waved their cellphone lights in response.

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Follow the AP's coverage of the war between Russia and Ukraine: [*http://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](http://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** March 21, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Let Ukrainian refugees in without visas, urge MPs*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64W8-VVH1-F072-410C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

February 27, 2022 Sunday

Second Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 6

**Length:** 784 words

**Byline:** ASHLEY COWBURN POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

The UK needs to ditch bureaucracy and visa restrictions to provide sanctuary to Ukrainians fleeing their country under attack from Russia, senior Tory and Labour MPs have said.

As the Kremlin wages war on their eastern European neighbour, Yvette Cooper, the shadow home secretary, said it was "immoral" to apply usual visa restrictions to Ukranians escaping war.

Priti Patel called her comments "appalling misinformation" and said "the facts" were in government guidance that she shared. The document showed a visa application fee is being waived for family members of Britons who live in Ukraine and Ukrainians in the UK are being given temporary concessions when their visa expires.

According to the latest estimates from the UN refugee agency, almost 116,000 have fled their homes - predominately to Poland, Hungary, Moldova, Slovakia and Romania - since Vladimir Putin declared war.

Earlier this week The Independent reported that there is currently no safe and legal route for Ukrainians to travel directly from their country to the UK in order to seek asylum, unless they have close British relatives.

A No 10 spokesperson said on Friday that troops had been deployed to help the humanitarian response in Poland and were "working incredibly closely with Ukraine's neighbours" to help support those fleeing.

But they would not be drawn on any further action when asked about safe and legal routes for those wanting to seek asylum in the UK.

Posting on social media yesterday, Conservative MP Julian Smith said ministers must "welcome" those who have been displaced, and "make it as easy as possible to be here".

"It's really important that the United Kingdom makes an immediate open, welcoming & warm hearted commitment of sanctuary to those who wish to leave Ukraine.

"Rip up the usual bureaucracy & let's just say they are welcome & we will make it as easy as possible to be here."

Ms Cooper also tweeted yesterday: "Ukraine is under fire. People are fleeing war. Yet Home Office still applies normal visa restrictions inc salaries, language, close relatives."

She said this "isn't solidarity" with Ukraine but "immoral" and urged the government to "urgently provide simple sanctuary route to UK for Ukrainians who need our help".

The government told The Independent last week it had waived language requirements for dependents of British nationals.

Speaking during a visit to Birmingham, the Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer said Britain should be prepared to take in ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, saying the government has "got this one wrong" in continuing to apply existing visa rules.

"We must help Ukrainian people looking for safety. That is what we have always done as a country in a moment like this," he said.

"The government has got this one wrong. They are applying the same rules as they had before."

He called for a "humanitarian approach" with "sanctuary for those who are fleeing from Russian aggression, fleeing from this invasion, fleeing for their lives".

It comes after a poll by YouGov - following the Russian invasion - found almost two-thirds of British people would support the introduction of a resettlement scheme for those fleeing Ukraine.

Ms Cooper said the war was "already having devastating consequences", adding: "The UK has a duty to work with our allies to provide humanitarian assistance and support to those fleeing this horrific situation."

"We must also work with the UN Refugee Agency to make sure contingency plans are ready for further support and sanctuary schemes that will be needed and be prepared to play our part in further international action to support refugees."

Images of Downing Street and other government buildings flying Ukrainian flags posted on social media were also met with calls to ease restrictions on movement.

"Don't wave flags; waive visas," Sabir Zazai, the chief executive of the Scottish Refugee Council, said. "Only then will you truly stand with #Ukraine or anyone else fleeing a dreadful conflict."

In an update posted on Twitter yesterday, the Home Office said the UK government "has an extensive visa application centre network" in countries neighbouring Ukraine.

"Ukrainians in these countries can access these services & apply for visa under existing immigration routes," they said.

The department added: "We have been planning for the impact that a Russian invasion would have on visa application centres, and swift action was taken to ensure contingency plans were put in place.

"More staff have been surged to visa application centres. Dependents of [UK] nationals residents in [Ukraine] needing a UK visa can apply through the new, temporary Lviv location or through a visa application centre in nearby countries including Poland, Moldova, Romania & Hungary."

**Load-Date:** February 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Scotland ready to welcome 3,000 Ukrainian refugees immediately - Sturgeon*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6509-ND71-DY4H-K4GF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 13, 2022 Sunday 11:51 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 663 words

**Byline:** Katrine Bussey

**Highlight:** The First Minister said the Scottish Government could be a 'super sponsor' for refugees fleeing Ukraine.

**Body**

[*Scotland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scotland) "stands ready" to take 3,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** immediately, [*Nicola Sturgeon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nicola-sturgeon) said as she pledged the country could be a "super sponsor" for those fleeing the war.

The Scottish [*First Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/first-minister) said that could help people looking to escape Ukraine get here quickly amid concerns the sponsorship scheme being organised by the UK Government could be "slow and cumbersome".

Levelling Up Secretary [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) insisted this is the "fastest way" of providing people with support, with people in the UK being urged to sign up if they are prepared to take Ukrainians into their homes for up to six months.

While more than two million people are now thought to have left Ukraine following the Russian invasion, the UK Government has so far issued more than 3,000 visas to those looking to escape the conflict.

Ms Sturgeon said she had made clear to Westminster that the [*Scottish Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scottish-government) "stand ready to welcome 3,000 Ukrainians as an immediate step" and would then take "at least a proportionate share" of people coming to the UK.

4/ I have said to UK gov that we stand ready to welcome 3000 Ukrainians as an immediate step -and then at least a proportionate share of total coming to UK overall. What matters most is getting them here quickly, safely and with minimum bureaucracy and maximum support- Nicola Sturgeon (@NicolaSturgeon) [*March 13, 2022*](https://twitter.com/NicolaSturgeon/status/1502938753836453896?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

"What matters most is getting them here quickly, safely and with minimum bureaucracy and maximum support," she insisted.

The Scottish First Minister set out her position in a series of tweets at the same time as the UK Government set out details of its Homes for Ukraine scheme - which will take an uncapped number of refugees.

A website where people can register their interest in taking part in the scheme will open on Monday, which will see people open their homes to refugees, or alternatively offer them a separate property to stay in.

All those offering accommodation will be vetted while Ukrainians coming to the UK under the scheme will undergo security checks.

Sponsors will have to provide homes or a spare room rent-free for a minimum stay of six months, but will will receive £350 per month in return.

Ms Sturgeon said it was "vital" that this community sponsorship should be "easy to use, fast, humane and safe".

Having the Scottish and Welsh governments acting as super sponsors, would allow large numbers of refugees to come to those countries quickly, Ms Sturgeon added.

In the first wave, Scotland would expect to take in 3,000 and Wales 1,000 - with more welcomed in later waves.

Ms Sturgeon and her Welsh counterpart Mark Drakeford have already sets out their proposals in a letter to Mr Gove.

On Sunday, the Scottish First Minister tweeted: "If UK gov is not willing (wrongly in my view) to waive visa requirements for Ukrainians seeking refuge as other countries have done, it is vital that its community sponsorship scheme is easy to use, fast, humane and safe."

While she said the devolved administration did not "yet know all the details" of the UK's proposed scheme, she added: "I am worried that it will be slow and cumbersome (people will need sponsors arranged before entry to UK), lack proper support and safeguarding, and not be sustainable for length of time people may need to be here.

"That is why @scotgov is offering to act as a 'super sponsor' - this would allow significant numbers to arrive here quickly and be temporarily accommodated while we work with local partners to arrange longer-term housing (inc from volunteers) and arrange safeguarding & support.

"I have said to UK gov that we stand ready to welcome 3000 Ukrainians as an immediate step - and then at least a proportionate share of total coming to UK overall. What matters most is getting them here quickly, safely and with minimum bureaucracy and maximum support.

"I hope UK gov accepts this @scotgov proposal (which is being made by Welsh gov too) and allow us to get on with offering sanctuary to those fleeing the war."

**Load-Date:** March 13, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ireland confirms Priti Patel raised concerns about 'backdoor' to UK for Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YH-4931-DY4H-K2VM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 9, 2022 Wednesday 7:39 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 741 words

**Byline:** Andrew Woodcock

**Highlight:** UK stance branded 'disgraceful' and 'irresponsible' by MPs in Dublin

**Body**

Irish prime minister Michel Martin has confirmed that [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) told Dublin she was concerned that the country's welcoming policy towards ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) would allow them to reach the UK by the back door.

An [*anonymous briefing from a UK government source*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-refugees-home-office-ireland-b2030874.html) on Tuesday suggested that Ukrainian criminals or drug dealers could take advantage of the Anglo-Irish common travel area to gain access to mainland Britain.

The suggestion was blasted as "disgraceful" and "absolutely terrible" by members of the Irish parliament today.

And Mr Martin said that justice minister Helen McEntee had pointed out to home secretary that [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) was part of the response of the whole EU, which has waived visas for Ukrainians fleeing [*Vladimir Putin's murderous assault on their homeland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-latest-putin-troops-b2031656.html).

"That continues to be our position in respect of prioritising the humanitarian response, above and beyond anything else," Mr Martin said.

More than 2,500 Ukrainians, including many children, had been welcomed visa-free to the Republic by Wednesday, compared to 760 who had been granted visas to enter the UK.

Mr Martin told the Dil that in the largest humanitarian crisis in Europe since the Second World War "some of the norms that would characterise business-as-usual would have to be put to one side".

"This crisis is going to be so big in my view, that we have to pull out all the stops as quickly as we can as a government," he said.

An anonymous government source was quoted in the Daily Telegraph on Tuesday claiming Ukrainians will be able to travel on to the UK without biometric checks because of the common travel area (CTA).

"Ireland has basically opened the door to everyone in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , which creates a problem due to the CTA," the source said.

"We've seen before with migrants from Albania that they have come through Dublin, into Belfast and across to the mainland to Liverpool. That's created a drug cartel route."

But it was quickly pointed out that the visa-free CTA only applies to UK and Irish citizens, not to migrants from other countries.

Simon Cox, a barrister at the Doughty Street Chambers firm, dismissed the claim as "dirty propaganda", adding: " Ireland has security checks on Ukrainians arriving without visas. Just as UK has for French people arriving without visas."

And the briefing provoked an angry response in the Dublin parliament, where Social Democrat MP Jennifer Whitmore said: "I think it's disgraceful and there's a responsibility to actually do a lot more and for them to welcome people into their country."

"Under the Common Travel Area arrangements, you have to be an Irish or British citizen to utilise that right of movement. So what has been said is completely wrong.

"What it does is it creates this fear amongst people and creates division. It was incredibly irresponsible and they should never have made that statement."

Another MP, Richard Boyd Barrett said Britain's [*attitude to* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukrainian-refugees-home-office-visa-uk-b2031392.html) was "absolutely terrible".

"It really shows a considerable hypocrisy on the part of the British government, who are very keen to justify their own involvement in military alliances, but then don't want us to extend the sort of humanitarian solidarity and refuge to people fleeing the conflict," he told the Dil.

Mr Martin said the border with Northern Ireland will not be closed.

"We have an open border with Northern Ireland, that is not going to change - be that for pandemic reasons or be that for refugee reasons," he said.

"We are not going to shut the border and the UK government will understand this in the same way as we understood it when it was coming the other way with the pandemic.

"The best way is not to shut a border but to ensure you share information. That gives confidence that the security issue can be addressed."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees have a ‘taste of their previous life’ thanks to bike charity*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:661R-03Y1-DY4H-K342-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 29, 2022 Friday 8:00 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 506 words

**Byline:** Lottie Kilraine

**Highlight:** The Bike Project has provided almost 10,000 cycles to refugees.

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have said they have experienced “a taste of our previous life” because of a charity which gives refurbished second-hand bikes to those who have been displaced.

Charity The Bike Project, which was set up in 2013, takes second-hand or abandoned bikes, mends them and provides them to refugees and asylum seekers living in [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london) and Birmingham.

Kateryna Herych, 38, fled [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) , Ukraine on April 26 with her eight-year-old daughter Daniella Googe and said The Bike Project has given them the chance to “have a taste of our previous life”.

“We cycled every weekend just for fun (in Ukraine) and I usually used a bike to commute to my job so when we came here we missed that time and The Bike Project gave us the opportunity to have a taste of our previous life,” Ms Herych told the PA news agency.

The pair have used their bikes to explore new places in London, with a trip to [*Richmond Park*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/richmond-park) to see deer being cited as a highlight of their visits.

Viktoriia Korneiuk, 27, a lawyer who came to London a month ago from Ukraine, was excited to receive an orange bike from the charity, which bore a striking resemblance to a bike her mother once owned.

“I remember my mum had almost the same one – an orange bike – and when I was a child she taught me how to ride a bicycle with a similar one,” she said.

“So I have feelings and emotions for this bike. It is not just transport for me, it is almost like a friend for me.”

She added that the project is a “significantly important initiative” because it allows refugees to “integrate into society”.

“Having your bicycle you can go somewhere, you can discover the territory around without spending too much money or thinking I cannot afford this. You can meet new friends, you can see new parks,” she said.

Jem Stein, the founder and chief executive of The Bike Project, said the idea for the project began while he was at university, where he joined a befriending scheme for unaccompanied asylum seekers and met a 16-year-old called [*Adam*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/adam) who fled Darfur in Sudan.

“He applied for asylum and was given just £39 a week to live off and wasn’t allowed to work. Now, one of the big challenges of living in London is the cost of public transport … and one of the first things I did to help Adam settle in was get him a bike,” he said.

He added: “The (Bike Project’s) mission is simple – to get refugees cycling.

“Here in our workshop (is) where the magic happens. We collect old bikes, refurbish them and then people come and collect them.”

This year the charity is set to have provided 10,000 bikes to refugees.

Katherine Potsides, the events manager at [*Herne Hill*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/herne-hill) velodrome, which has been a donation centre for The Bike Project for over a year, said: “Giving refugee families access to a working bike is a really important way of getting people settled into their lives here, settled into new jobs and we think it’s a fantastic and fun and healthy and sustainable way to get around the town.”

To find out more about The Bike Project and how to donate a bike visit [*https://thebikeproject.co.uk*](https://thebikeproject.co.uk)/

**Load-Date:** July 29, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees forced to travel home for abortions; Women grappling with laws in host countries, finds study*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:688C-P8C1-JCS0-D4RX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

May 19, 2023 Friday

Second Edition

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**Section:** WORLD; Pg. 20

**Length:** 643 words

**Byline:** MAYA OPPENHEIM WOMEN'S CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

Ukrainian women who sought refuge in European Union countries are being forced to travel through dangerous conflict zones to access abortions and contraception in their native country, a study has warned.

Research found some women from Ukraine now living in Poland, Romania, Hungary and Slovakia are having to temporarily return home as it is "easier" to access reproductive healthcare there, despite the stress of travelling back into the wartorn country.

The study, by the Center for Reproductive Rights and eight human rights organisations, warned refugees are being put "at risk" as they grapple with issues such as legal restrictions and cost barriers when trying to access the right care. Other barriers include "information shortfalls, poor quality care" as well as "institutional racism and substandard care", it said.

Krystyna Kacpura, of the Federa Foundation for Women and Family Planning in Poland, an NGO involved in the report, said Ukrainian women have struggled to come to terms with the fact "there is no real access" to abortion in Poland and that other reproductive health services, such as emergency contraception, are "very limited".

Anastasiia Podorozhnia, of Martynka, a Ukrainian organisation also based in Poland, added: "We were approached by a teenage girl, already of legal age, asking where to get the morning after pill in Poland, because she went to a pharmacy and they looked at her so strangely and she, as a person from Ukraine, didn't expect that."

Almost 8 million Ukrainians have been forced to leave the country since Russia launched an invasion in February last year, with women and children making up the majority of refugees.

Leah Hoctor, a senior regional director at the Center for Reproductive Rights, said: "The European Union has promised to provide refugees from Ukraine with sanctuary and care. Yet women from Ukraine who are now in Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia often experience a very different reality when they need sexual and reproductive healthcare. Instead of care and protection, they regularly face an obstacle course of restrictions, confusion, stigma and discrimination."

Ms Hoctor warned the "health and wellbeing" of some ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are being put "at risk" by an inability to access "time-sensitive healthcare and support services" which is exacerbating "the harm they have endured" from Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Anna Ivanyi, of the Emma Association in Hungary, another organisation involved in the research, explained female refugees from Ukraine return to their homeland as it is "easier for them to go home and get the pill or the abortion pill" as medical abortions are not permitted in Hungary. "These women can travel back and forth between Ukraine and Hungary, but it doesn't mean that it's peaceful or normal travel," she added. "It's very stressful for them."

Yulia\*, who is from Ukraine but is now living in Romania, claimed women "are driving back" to the western part of Ukraine from other countries to find a doctor "and doing what they used to" because they do not have other options.

Refugees subjected to rape and sexual assault in Ukraine linked to the conflict are also struggling to get the right support after leaving their home country, the research said.

Ms Kacpura said she has spoken to women in their forties with families who have burst into tears as they told her they were raped.

"But they said, 'Please don't tell anybody, because I have my family, and my husband has been fighting'," Ms Kacpura added. She said refugees say: "'Could you imagine if I add to his troubles? What if he comes from the war and sees an additional child?'??? When I explain to them that they can obtain legal abortion in Poland if they report and get a prosecutor's certificate, they say, 'My life, my family is the most important for me right now'."

\*Name changed to protect identity

**Load-Date:** May 18, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Home Office claims Ukrainian refugees in Calais can take free Eurostar to Lille -but train does not exist*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YG-8PN1-DY4H-K3J9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 9, 2022 Wednesday 2:10 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:5

**Length:** 918 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Exclusive: Government accused of 'outright lies' after Eurostar confirms trains do not stop in Calais

**Body**

The [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) has been accused of "outright lies" after it claimed [***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) in Calais could obtain free [*Eurostar*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/eurostar) tickets to travel to a UK visa centre in [*Lille*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lille) - when in fact this route does not exist.

Government officials said on Tuesday that hundreds of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Calais could benefit from free tickets being offered by Eurostar to make the 70-mile trip to submit their visa applications in Lille -but the Eurostar service does not currently stop in [*Calais*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/calais) at all.

Hundreds of Ukrainians have arrived in the French port town in recent days after fleeing the Russian onslaught in their country. Most are trying to join relatives in the UK under the Home Office's family migration scheme, announced last week.

Despite calls for these refugees to be allowed to submit their applications to the scheme in Calais, [*No 10 announced on Tuesday*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/russia-ukraine-crisis-refugees-visa-calais-b2031004.html) that they would need to travel to a pop-up visa centre in Lille to do so, or otherwise travel to visa centres in Paris or Brussels.

In response to concerns about how the Ukrainians -most of whom are women, children and elderly people -would travel to these cities, a Home Office official said they could benefit from free tickets being offered by Eurostar to make the journey.

However, Eurostar has confirmed to The Independent on Wednesday that Eurostar services do not currently stop at Calais.

A spokesperson said Ukrainian nationals could access free Eurostar travel from the continent to the UK, but that for travel within France, they would need to make contact with SNCF, France's internal train service.

The Independent has set up a petition calling on the UK government to be at the forefront of the international community offering aid and support to those in Ukraine. To sign the petition .

A Home Office spokesperson told The Independent the Home Office official "misspoke" on Tuesday.

They said the department was going to offer alternative free transport for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to get from Calais to Lille as soon as possible. They could not say what form this transport would take.

Clare Mosely, founder of Care4Calais, which has been supporting Ukrainians in Calais, accused the Home Office of "outright lying".

"They've said another thing that they don't know to be true. It's ridiculous. I don't understand how they can get away with it. When is something going to notice that the Home Office makes false statements? There have been about three in a week," she said.

It comes after home secretary Priti Patel was[*accused by a senior Conservative MP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/priti-patel-ukraine-refugees-calais-b2030979.html) of misleading parliament over arrangements for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** trying to reach the UK via Calais, after she twice claimed that a centre had been set up on the way to the French port - only for it to later emerge that no such centre had been set up.

French authorities have said that since 28 February, 638 Ukrainians have attempted to travel to the UK to join their families there via the port of Calais or Eurotunnel, of whom 325 have been granted entry and 313 have been turned away by UK authorities due to not having visas.

A Home Office spokesperson said: "We are providing free transport to Lille from Calais for anyone who did not arrive by car or who is otherwise unable to travel independently. Eurostar are offering free tickets to the UK for anyone who holds a valid visa.

"A Home Office official who has been working round the clock to help the people of Ukraine get to the UK explained Eurostar's offer incorrectly during a press briefing. This was corrected soon afterwards when a journalist contacted the press office. To suggest this was a deliberate attempt to deceive is offensive."

Concern is also mounting around the [*bureaucratic process*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukrainian-refugees-uk-visa-centres-home-office-europe-b2031026.html) refugees are confronted with when trying to apply under the UK's family migration route, as it emerged some are having to wait weeks to get a visa appointment, while others turned up to visa centres to discover that they were closed.

In order to submit an application to the scheme, refugees are required to attend a UK visa centre, of which there are only one or two of these centres in most EU countries, meaning many refugees must travel for several hours to attend one.

Home Office figures show only 760 visas have been granted so far under the family route, despite tens of thousands of applications having been submitted.

Ukraine's ambassador in London Vadym Prystaiko meanwhile[*urged ministers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-russia-invasion-refugees-visa-uk-b2031832.html) to temporarily drop visa requirements, saying that if bureaucratic procedures were "simplified" it would "definitely resolve all the issues".

Speaking to MPs on Monday morning, he said: "I don't expect many of them to come. I don't want to see these pictures of people banging at the doors in Calais and scratching the doors which are quite sealed."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Mila Kunis left Ukraine for the US as a child. Now she's helping Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:653F-S441-DY4H-K25D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 28, 2022 Monday 2:44 AM GMT

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**Section:** AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 577 words

**Byline:** Clémence Michallon

**Highlight:** Kunis was born in 1983 in Chernivtsi, a city in southwestern Ukraine

**Body**

When actor [*Mila Kunis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mila-kunis) was seven, her family left [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , her native country, and moved to the US.

"It was right at the fall [of the Soviet Union]," Kunis, who has now started a [*fundraiser*](https://www.gofundme.com/f/stand-with-ukraine) to support ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, told the [*Los Angeles Times*](https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2008-oct-16-et-mila16-story.html) in 2008. "It was very communist, and my parents wanted my brother and me to have a future, and so they just dropped everything. They came with $250."

Kunis was born in 1983 in the city of Chernivtsi in southwestern Ukraine to Mark and Elvira Kunis, respectively a mechanical engineer and a physics teacher.

Once in the US, her father "did odd jobs - painting houses, installing toilets and delivering pizza - while her mother worked in the back room of a Thrifty drugstore", the LA Times reported.

Kunis has said she initially struggled to adapt to the US as a child. Her native language was Russian, and she didn't speak English when her family emigrated.

"Ultimately, I adjusted fairly quickly and fairly well," Kunis told the LA Times. "But it must have been hard, because I blocked out second grade completely. I have no recollection of it. I always talk to my mom and my grandma about it. It was because I cried every day. I didn't understand the culture. I didn't understand the people. I didn't understand the language."

She lated described the experience in an essay she wrote to get into college, urging the reader to "imagine being blind and deaf at age seven."

"That's kind of what it felt like moving to the States," Kunis added in her conversation with the LA Times. "But I got over it pretty fast."

Kunis took acting classes as a child and got her first television credit in 1994 in the soap opera Days of Our Lives. Appearances in programmes such as Baywatch and 7th Heaven followed, and in 1998 she joined the cast of That '70s Show. (Also starring in the series was Ashton Kutcher, whom Kunis married in 2015).

Kunis also forged a career on the film side, which has included roles in Forgetting Sarah Marshall (2008), Black Swan (2010), Friends with Benefits (2011), and The Spy Who Dumped Me (2018). She will play the lead role in the upcoming Netflix adaptation of Jessica Knoll's bestselling novel Luckiest Girl Alive.

In a video released on Thursday, Kunis announced she and Kutcher had launched a fundraiser to support Ukraine amid Russia's invasion of the country.

She aid she has always considered herself "a proud American - I love everything that this country has done for myself and my family, but today I have never been more proud to be a Ukrainian."

"Ukrainians are proud and brave people who deserve our help in their time of need," she wrote in a statement. "This unjust attack on Ukraine and humanity at large is devastating and the Ukrainian people need our support."

Kunis and Kutcher will match donations to the newly created fund up to $3m.

"While we are witnessing the bravery of Ukrainians, we are also bearing witness to the unimaginable burden of those who have chosen safety," Kunis added. "Countless amounts of people have left everything they know and love behind to seek refuge. With nothing but what they could carry, these ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are in need of housing and supplies right away."

Donations will go towards two organisations: Flexport.org, which coordinates shipments of supplies to refugees in Poland, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, and Moldova; and Airbnb.org, an independent nonprofit which works with Airbnb to provide free, short-term housing to refugees fleeing Ukraine.

**Load-Date:** March 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees forced to travel home for abortions; Women grappling with laws in host countries, finds study*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:688C-P8C1-JCS0-D4R3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

May 19, 2023 Friday

First Edition

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**Section:** WORLD; Pg. 18

**Length:** 643 words

**Byline:** MAYA OPPENHEIM WOMEN'S CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

Ukrainian women who sought refuge in European Union countries are being forced to travel through dangerous conflict zones to access abortions and contraception in their native country, a study has warned.

Research found some women from Ukraine now living in Poland, Romania, Hungary and Slovakia are having to temporarily return home as it is "easier" to access reproductive healthcare there, despite the stress of travelling back into the wartorn country.

The study, by the Center for Reproductive Rights and eight human rights organisations, warned refugees are being put "at risk" as they grapple with issues such as legal restrictions and cost barriers when trying to access the right care. Other barriers include "information shortfalls, poor quality care" as well as "institutional racism and substandard care", it said.

Krystyna Kacpura, of the Federa Foundation for Women and Family Planning in Poland, an NGO involved in the report, said Ukrainian women have struggled to come to terms with the fact "there is no real access" to abortion in Poland and that other reproductive health services, such as emergency contraception, are "very limited".

Anastasiia Podorozhnia, of Martynka, a Ukrainian organisation also based in Poland, added: "We were approached by a teenage girl, already of legal age, asking where to get the morning after pill in Poland, because she went to a pharmacy and they looked at her so strangely and she, as a person from Ukraine, didn't expect that."

Almost 8 million Ukrainians have been forced to leave the country since Russia launched an invasion in February last year, with women and children making up the majority of refugees.

Leah Hoctor, a senior regional director at the Center for Reproductive Rights, said: "The European Union has promised to provide refugees from Ukraine with sanctuary and care. Yet women from Ukraine who are now in Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia often experience a very different reality when they need sexual and reproductive healthcare. Instead of care and protection, they regularly face an obstacle course of restrictions, confusion, stigma and discrimination."

Ms Hoctor warned the "health and wellbeing" of some ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are being put "at risk" by an inability to access "time-sensitive healthcare and support services" which is exacerbating "the harm they have endured" from Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Anna Ivanyi, of the Emma Association in Hungary, another organisation involved in the research, explained female refugees from Ukraine return to their homeland as it is "easier for them to go home and get the pill or the abortion pill" as medical abortions are not permitted in Hungary. "These women can travel back and forth between Ukraine and Hungary, but it doesn't mean that it's peaceful or normal travel," she added. "It's very stressful for them."

Yulia\*, who is from Ukraine but is now living in Romania, claimed women "are driving back" to the western part of Ukraine from other countries to find a doctor "and doing what they used to" because they do not have other options.

Refugees subjected to rape and sexual assault in Ukraine linked to the conflict are also struggling to get the right support after leaving their home country, the research said.

Ms Kacpura said she has spoken to women in their forties with families who have burst into tears as they told her they were raped.

"But they said, 'Please don't tell anybody, because I have my family, and my husband has been fighting'," Ms Kacpura added. She said refugees say: "'Could you imagine if I add to his troubles? What if he comes from the war and sees an additional child?'??? When I explain to them that they can obtain legal abortion in Poland if they report and get a prosecutor's certificate, they say, 'My life, my family is the most important for me right now'."

\*Name changed to protect identity

**Load-Date:** May 18, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Britons offered £350 a month by government to open their homes to Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6507-WH51-DY4H-K15X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 13, 2022 Sunday 12:07 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:7

**Length:** 977 words

**Byline:** Chiara Giordano and Adam Forrest

**Highlight:** Charities and opposition parties fear scheme will be too 'slow and cumbersome'

**Body**

Britons opening their homes to ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) fleeing the Russian invasion will receive a "thank you" payment of £350 per month, the government has announced.

The Homes for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) scheme, to be rolled out this week, will allow individuals, charities, community groups and businesses to bring people fleeing the war to safety, even if they have no ties to the UK.

People sponsoring refugees through the new uncapped route will be required to commit to the scheme for a minimum of six months - but will encouraged to keep up the offer for as long as they can.

Cabinet minister Michael Gove said "tens of thousands" of refugees could come through the route, as he revealed on Sunday that local authorities would receive £10,000 for each Ukrainian refugee sponsored in their area.

But charities and opposition parties expressed concern about the "slow and cumbersome" offer - and compared the reliance on social media to match sponsors and refugees to "online dating".

The Refugee Council said the government was putting too many "bureaucratic hurdles" in the way - and said the scene "will inevitably be restricted to those who are known to people in the UK".

Mr Gove said charities would help in the "matching process" - but said individuals and community groups would also use social media to connect with refugees.

He told Sky News' Sophy Ridge on Sunday: "We know charities, and we are working with them, who are working to identify people on the ground, and helping to identify people here to create the matching process."

A website gathering expressions of interest is set to launch on Monday, and Mr Gove said he expected to see the first arrivals within a week.

Sponsored refugees will be granted 36 months leave to remain in the UK, with entitlement to benefits and public services. Those offering accommodation will be vetted and Ukrainian applicants will undergo security checks.

Enver Solomon, chief executive of the Refugee Council, said: "By establishing a visa route and naming scheme, it will inevitably be restricted to those who are known to people in the UK", adding that it would be a "lengthy" application process.

Labour also cautioned that "too many questions remain unanswered" about the new scheme.

Shadow levelling up minister Lisa Nandy told LBC: "There's no help ... to make people match their sponsor. We're asking people to ask to take to social media at a time they're fleeing a war zone. This is a serious crisis - it's not online dating situation."

Questioning the lack of detail in the sponsorship plan, Sir Keir Starmer told Sky News: "What would comfort me more frankly is if I heard from Michael Gove that there were plans in place for the support that's actually going to be needed on arrival."

Asked if he was looking at taking in a Ukrainian refugee, Mr Gove said: "Yes," and that he was "exploring what I can do ... Without going into my personal circumstances, there are a couple of things I need to sort out - but yes".

Meanwhile, Nicola Sturgeon and Mark Drakeford have said both Scotland and Wales are willing to become "super sponsors" for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

In a letter to Mr Gove, they also renewed their calls on Westminster to waive all visa requirements for Ukrainian nationals trying to get into the UK.

First minister and SNP Nicola Sturgeon said on Sunday that Scotland "stands ready" to take 3,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** immediately.

Ms Sturgeon also said she was worried the UK sponsorship scheme will be "slow and cumbersome", will lack proper support and safeguarding, and may not be sustainable for the length of time that people may need to stay in the UK.

Mr Gove said additional payments would be made to local authorities for each Ukrainian child who comes to the UK under the sponsorship route to help with their schooling.

Education secretary Nadhim Zahawi announced on Saturday that online lessons will be made available to refugee pupils as they transition to "life and safety" in the UK.

Labour's shadow levelling-up secretary Lisa Nandy said said it was still "unclear what support will be offered to vulnerable children and older people" and "whether provision is made for unaccompanied children".

Ms Nandy also said that if Britons were required to have a prior connection to a Ukrainian family to sponsor them, that would be a "severe limitation".

The Independent has launched a petition calling for the UK to lead the international community in helping those who have been displaced by the conflict.

We are calling for the following two actions:

Aid to be given to the countries that neighbour Ukraine, so that they have enough supplies of food, clothing and shelter needed to care for people who have been forced to abandon their homes. The government must also do more to make the UK a haven for refugees, and ensure we take in Ukrainians who want to find safety here.

If you, too, would like to help a nation in need then we urge you to add your signature and declare: [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0).

[*To sign the petition, click here.*](https://chng.it/5MntDbyyrn)

We thank you for your support.

The Independent is also raising money for the people of Ukraine - if you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gofundme.com%2Frefugeeswelcome&data=04%7C01%7CKaty.Clifton%40independent.co.uk%7C2a2d4959602a48a7514408d9fbc3eb4d%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637817641167117856%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=%2FDXULZcjP0zOpL9jB%2FpDx3Z10K6NwyORJy68hlaIVYY%3D&reserved=0) for our GoFundMe page.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here.*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Ftopic%2Frefugees-welcome-0&data=04%7C01%7CKaty.Clifton%40independent.co.uk%7C2a2d4959602a48a7514408d9fbc3eb4d%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637817641167117856%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=RZ7crcxX9U9jftiU38S4VVIl8uiLT6BXiwvDblkPG%2Fo%3D&reserved=0)

**Load-Date:** March 13, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Nearly 89,000 British households sign up to take in Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650R-KR01-DY4H-K3WH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 15, 2022 Tuesday 11:05 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 868 words

**Byline:** Geraldine Scott

**Highlight:** Foreign Office minister James Cleverly said he was glad the website had crashed because it showed the public's generosity.

**Body**

Nearly 89,000 households have now signed up to provide a home for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** as a Government minister said he was "actually quite proud" the website allowing [*Britons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britons) to put themselves forward had crashed within the first few minutes of going live.

Some 88,712 households had registered for the Homes for Ukraine scheme by Tuesday morning, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities said, as the Prime Minister aimed to match the efforts at home with foreign action.

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) is set to travel to Saudi Arabia on Tuesday in a bid to further wean the UK off Russian oil and gas.

Register your interest in our [*#HomesForUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/HomesForUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) scheme here [*https://t.co/iL1dcrW4uC*](https://t.co/iL1dcrW4uC) [*pic.twitter.com/b1nJ3m2n0S*](https://t.co/b1nJ3m2n0S) - Michael Gove (@michaelgove) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/michaelgove/status/1503402365692616706?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Before that, he will host visiting leaders of the Joint Expeditionary Force at Lancaster House, and the leaders of Finland and Sweden.

Further sanctions against those connected to Vladimir Putin are also expected to be announced.

As further attacks were reported in Ukraine, Foreign Office minister [*James Cleverly*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/james-cleverly) praised the [*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) public for their efforts to support the country.

He said he was "glad the website crashed, because it is a reflection of that generosity of the British people" after households rushed to sign up for the Homes for Ukraine scheme launched on Monday.

"The irony of this is I'm actually quite proud that the system struggled," Mr Cleverly told LBC.

"We built it quickly. We could have, yes... we could have spent more time stress-testing this website and delayed it a couple of days before launching.

"But, frankly, I'm glad we moved quickly on this and we're moving quickly to ensure we're able to help the ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***."

He added: "I know this is a weird thing to say as a Government minister - I'm glad the website crashed, because it is a reflection of that generosity of the British people."

The scheme, launched by Communities Secretary [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) , will allow Britons to host refugees for a minimum of six months in exchange for a £350 thank you payment.

But already the programme has come under criticism as currently, households need to have a named refugee in order to take part, rather than being matched with those in need by the Government.

However, Mr Cleverly said the latter process would hold up getting refugees the help they needed.

He told BBC Radio 4's Today programme: "There are charities, faith groups, who are already in contact with people in Ukraine, people that need help and support.

"So, actually, rather than introduce a potentially slow and bureaucratic process, where people have already got connections - and there are a huge number of people and organisations that have already got connections with Ukrainians - rather than replicate, duplicate and slow that down, we want to be as agile and as quick as possible.

"That's why we're saying that, you know, we've got organisations which are already in contact with Ukrainians. We've now set up this site so British people can register their willingness to help and support.

"And, actually, what we're looking to do is connect those both ends of that system together and do so in a way that's quick and efficient."

Asked whether he will be taking part in the scheme, he told LBC: "I have genuinely considered this. I've discussed this with my wife.

"I don't know whether our personal circumstances will allow us to do this right at the moment. As you know, Nick, my wife, she's going through medical treatment at the moment, but it's absolutely something that I'm considering."

I know this is a weird thing to say as a Government minister - I'm glad the website crashed, because it is a reflection of that generosity of the British people

Foreign Office minister James Cleverly

It comes as two more British-based companies have said they will pull out of Russia due to heavy sanctions.

Tobacco giant Imperial Brands has announced it has started negotiations to sell its Russian business as it plans to exit the country, where it employs 1,000 people in sales and marketing, and at a factory.

UK-based car dealership business Inchcape has also said it will leave Russia because operating in the country "is no longer tenable".

Meanwhile, attacks were reported to continue across Ukraine, including in the capital Kyiv.

Mr Cleverly told BBC Breakfast: "It was meant to be some kind of lightning war where Russian troops swept across Ukraine.

"But what we're seeing is the defence by the Ukrainian people has been ferocious. This, of course, is incredibly frustrating to Vladimir Putin and we're now seeing an escalation, the targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure - which of course is illegal in international humanitarian law and the law of armed conflict."

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky, in a video released overnight, said negotiations with Russia were going "pretty well" and Mr Cleverly said he hoped a solution could be found.

Asked on the BBC's Good Morning Scotland programme if he thinks the talks between the two sides will yield a positive outcome, he said: "I really hope these talks are fruitful, but we will judge Russia by its actions, and what we want to see, of course, is for them to leave Ukraine."

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*The public wants a generous approach to welcoming Ukrainian refugees - the government must think again*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651F-C2N1-DY4H-K4C7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 18, 2022 Friday 10:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** EDITORIALS,VOICES; Version:1

**Length:** 897 words

**Byline:** Editorial

**Highlight:** Editorial: UK ministers trumpet that there is 'no cap' on the number of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** they will allow to enter the country but the bureaucratic system amounts to a cap, in effect, by limiting the numbers

**Body**

Andrii Zharikov, a Ukrainian who is a senior lecturer at the University of Portsmouth's law faculty, has abandoned his plan to bring his sister and mother to the UK, having been defeated by red tape. Although the government allows Ukrainians to bring family members here, it does not apply to people like Mr Zharikov, who has a work visa - even though [*Sajid Javid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sajid-javid) , the health secretary, claimed this week that it did.

Home Office [*guidance*](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-ukraine-family-scheme-visa) says family members can apply to join a UK-based relative, but only if the relative is a British national, has some form of settled status in the UK, has pre-settled status from an EU country or Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland, or is entitled to refugee status or humanitarian protection in the UK. The government should think again about those with work visas.

"I was appalled by the way it has been presented, with the government saying it has an open-door policy, but the scope is very, very limited," said Mr Zharikov. "I am very grateful for the EU approach, and I know my family will stay in the EU because of this and they are better off there, and I will do my best to look after them by sending money."

UK ministers trumpet that there is "no cap" on the number of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** they will allow to enter the country, but the bureaucratic system amounts to a cap, in effect, by limiting the numbers.

So far, 6,500 refugees [*have been allowed entry to Britain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-family-visas-richard-harrington-uk-b2038861.html) under the [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) family scheme, out of the 27,000 applications submitted.

The contrast with EU countries is stark, even allowing for the fact that many Ukrainians want to remain close to their country because they want to return. More than 2 million of the 3.2 million people who have so far left Ukraine have entered Poland. More than 197,000 refugees have been registered in Germany. More than 17,000 have arrived in France, which expects to welcome between 50,000 and 100,000. Ireland has already accepted more than 7,000, a response that should embarrass the UK government.

The EU's welcome decision to waive visa restrictions has not been copied by the UK. Ministers cite the need for security checks. Although they may have a point, this does not excuse the government being so slow to dismantle the bureaucratic hurdles stemming from its initial mistake of tweaking the existing system rather than creating a new one.

Another managed migration scheme does not measure up to the biggest refugee crisis since the Second World War. The irony is that the government should have seen it coming; unlike countries on the continent, the UK, along with the US, had been warning for weeks that Vladimir Putin planned to order the invasion of Ukraine.

The UK is now lagging badly behind EU countries. Although Priti Patel, the home secretary, has belatedly cut some red tape, some of her proposals to allow in more refugees have been blocked by Downing Street. The suspicion is that Boris Johnson prefers to fight the last war - the one about Brexit - rather than the real one against Russia, and wants to remind voters that its departure from the EU has allowed the UK to "take back control" of its borders.

Yet opinion polls show that the public wants a much more generous approach to welcoming ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** than the government has managed to date.

That generosity has been demonstrated by the remarkable response to the Ukraine sponsorship scheme, under which Britons can take refugees into their own homes. Some 147,513 people have registered in the UK - 122,390 in England, 8,625 in Scotland, 10,236 in Wales and 6,262 in Northern Ireland.

Yet the government has left it up to hosts and refugees to find each other. Although charities will help in the matching process, what Labour has rightly called a "DIY asylum scheme" will not be easy to navigate, and this is bound to limit the number coming to the UK.

Many practical problems are emerging. If they are to ensure that Ukrainians can be housed from early next week, local authorities will not have time to check every home taking in a refugee. There are fears that human traffickers will exploit the crisis. For some people who have offered space in their homes, there are more questions than answers. Will traumatised refugees, particularly children, get all the support they need? How will language problems be addressed? What happens if hosts and refugees don't get on?

Of course, the government has had to act quickly under great pressure, and was always going to have to learn as it went along. But there is still time for it to be more generous and flexible than it has been so far, in line with The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome) campaign and the wishes of a majority of the British people.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Benedict Cumberbatch says he hopes to take Ukrainian refugees into his home*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650C-09M1-JBNF-W0N4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 13, 2022 Sunday 7:13 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,FILM,CULTURE; Version:1

**Length:** 482 words

**Byline:** Ellie Harrison

**Highlight:** Actor has been a vocal supporter of Ukraine since Russia invaded the country

**Body**

[*Benedict Cumberbatch*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/benedict-cumberbatch) has said that he hopes to take part in a government scheme to offer ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** a place to live.

The "Homes for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) " initiative will allow members of the public, charities, businesses and community groups to offer accommodation to refugees who don't have family ties.

"It is a really shocking time to be a European two and a half hours flight away from Ukraine, and it's something that hangs over us," Cumberbatch told Sky News on the red carpet of the Baftas on Sunday (13 March).

The Sherlock star was [*wearing a round badge with the blue and yellow of the Ukrainian flag.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/fashion/benedict-cumberbatch-ukraine-baftas-award-b2034887.html)

"We all need to do more than wear a badge. We need to donate, we need to pressure our politicians to continue to create some kind of a refugee safety and a haven here for people who are suffering," he said.

"Everyone needs to do as much as they can... there's been a record number of people volunteering to take people into their homes, I hope to be part of that myself."

Find out more about the scheme [*here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-refugee-sponsorship-scheme-b2033722.html).

Most of the refugees fleeing Ukraine have been women and children, because men from 18-60 have stayed behind to fight and are forbidden from leaving the country. Many have already moved to other countries in Europe, mostly to stay with friends and family there.

More than 1.5 million refugees have arrived in Poland since the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February, out of a total of around 2.7 million people that the United Nations say have fled so far.

Earlier this week, [*Cumberbatch held up a Ukrainian flag*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/news/benedict-cumberbatch-ukraine-santa-barbara-b2032881.html) at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival in solidarity with the country as it is being invaded by Russia.

The actor was handed the flag by an audience member at the festival's Cinema Vanguard Award ceremony.

"Stand united with Ukraine," he shouted out as he went to leave the stage, before spotting someone holding up the flag to him and reaching out to retrieve it.

Cumberbatch is competing for the leading actor award for his performance in Jane Campion's western The Power of the Dog, which has the most nods of any film this year, [*with 12 nominations.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/news/2022-bafta-nominations-full-list-b2006786.html%22%20title=%222022%20Bafta%20nominations:%20Full%20list%20as%20Dune%20and%20Power%20of%20the%20Dog%20lead%20way)

You can follow along with updates on the Russia-Ukraine crisis at The Independent's live-blog [*here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-live-putin-zelensky-b2032596.html).

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 13, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'Punk rocker' poodle puts smiles on faces of Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:658V-BS81-DY4H-K272-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 22, 2022 Friday 10:56 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:2

**Length:** 530 words

**Byline:** Max McLean

**Highlight:** Juno's owner says she is 'really good at lighting these kids up and getting them to smile'

**Body**

A toy poodle with a pink mohawk, described as a 'punk rocker' by her owner, has been putting smiles on the faces of young ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland).

Eight-year-old [*Juno*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/juno) belongs to Lars Whelan, a volunteer at Warsaw Central railway station.

The former ship's captain, 48, from the US, said Juno has been to more than 30 countries but has never been in a situation like the one in Poland right now.

But she has quickly become a favourite among refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine since she arrived with Mr Whelan in early April.

He told the PA news agency: "She'll sit there and let a little kid hold her and pet her. It really makes a big difference to them.

"There's a lot of kids that (have) been travelling for two days, they don't know where they're going. They don't know where they are.

"They don't know what anyone's saying because they speak Ukrainian and people are speaking Polish or whatever.

"And they're kind of zombified. You know, they have a blank expression on their face.

"Juno's really good at lighting these kids up and getting them to smile and have a little bit of gleam in their eyes."

Mr Whelan, who grew up in [*Boston*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boston) but now lives in [*Hollywood*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hollywood) , has travelled the world with Juno, including a tour of the UK.

The pair headed to Poland to help refugees leaving Ukraine, with the option of dropping Juno off with friends in [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) if she was unhappy about being in the thick of it.

But any concerns were quickly dismissed and Juno is enjoying her role alongside Mr Whelan, who is a co-ordinator and supervisor at the station.

Mr Whelan said: "I was on the phone all day (on Wednesday) morning and she got annoyed and started pawing my face.

"I'm like 'what do you want?' It wasn't water... she wanted to go see the kids.

"So we made a round and then she was okay. She was looking forward to doing a little work.

"With the kids in the station, it's great. I just get down on their level and reach out... even though they don't speak I'll make the petting motion.

"They'll do a little petting of Juno or we'll let them hold her if it looks like the kids have it together.

"You could have a four-year-old in the middle of a full-blown temper tantrum, (Juno) can flip them out in 10 seconds and he's smiling and giggling."

Asked how Juno's pink hairdo came about, Mr Whelan said: "I had a toy poodle with my previous girlfriend and she didn't like me to give the dog a mohawk.

"So when I got Juno on my own, I'm like, she's going to have whatever I want. She's a little bit of a punk rocker."

The pair will continue to offer assistance in the area until mid-May, as the Russian invasion of Ukraine nears the two-month mark.

Mr Whelan said he hopes people can see that many volunteers are attempting to make the situation better.

"I like that Mr Rogers quote, you know - when something terrible happens, look for the people who are trying to do good and help," he said.

"You can see a lot of good in the world when you see how many people have really made an effort to come here, donate or work remotely to help these people.

"I just like to put that out there, that there's a lot of people making an effort to help these people and do what they can to make their situation better."

**Load-Date:** April 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ryan Reynolds and Blake Lively pledge to match donations for Ukrainian refugees up to $1m*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WB-7F61-DY4H-K3WJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 27, 2022 Sunday 10:38 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,FILM,CULTURE; Version:1

**Length:** 371 words

**Byline:** Annabel Nugent

**Highlight:** Couple encouraged fans to donate to the cause

**Body**

[*Blake Lively*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/blake-lively) and [*Ryan Reynolds*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ryan-reynolds) have promised to match donations made to assist ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) up to an amount of $1m (£745,850).

The couple - who share three daughters and have been married since 2012 - took to social media on Saturday (26 February).

The actors encouraged fans to make donations to assist Ukrainians who have been displaced by the ongoing invasion.

On Thursday (24 February), [*Russia*](https://indy-web-prod.brightsites.co.uk/topic/russia) launched a full-scale attack on its neighbour. Heavy fighting is underway in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) 's second city as Russian troops entered Kharkiv in the early hours of Sunday morning (27 February).

Reynolds, 45, wrote on Twitter: "In 48 hours, countless Ukrainians were forced to flee their homes to neighbouring countries. They need protection.

In 48 hours, countless Ukrainians were forced to flee their homes to neighboring countries. They need protection. When you donate, we'll match it up to $1,000,000, creating double the support. [*https://t.co/xCFL1Lptuw*](https://t.co/xCFL1Lptuw) [*https://t.co/CHp48E1KLQ*](https://t.co/CHp48E1KLQ) - Ryan Reynolds (@VancityReynolds) [*February 26, 2022*](https://twitter.com/VancityReynolds/status/1497639815185055750?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) "When you donate we'll match it up to $1,000,000, creating double the support."The Deadpool star shared a link to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) where people can donate money to help displaced families.Lively, 34, took to Instagram to post a similar message, writing: "@VancityReynolds [Reynolds' Instagram handle] and I are doubling every dollar donated to @usaforunhcr up to $1,000,000. Link in bio to donate."She continued: "@Usaforunhcr is on the ground helping the 50,000+ Ukrainians who had to flee their homes in less than 48 hours."@Usaforunhcr is providing life saving aid, and also working with neighbouring countries to ensure protection for these families."The Gossip Girl star wrote the caption alongside an image taken from the UNHCR of a child being lifted into someone's arms. View this post on Instagram[*A post shared by Blake Lively (@blakelively)*](https://www.instagram.com/p/Cac6_pJpQI1/?utm_source=ig_embed&utm_campaign=loading)

Major attacks in Ukraine on Saturday night (26 February) included a gas pipeline outside Kharkiv that was set ablaze by Russian troops, and an oil depot in Vasylkiv near [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) that was destroyed by a Russian missile strike.

You can follow along with updates at The Independent's Russia-Ukraine liveblog [*here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-latest-news-putin-war-zelensky-today-b2023848.html).

**Load-Date:** February 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Government urged to reopen family reunion route for Ukrainian refugees as children kept from parents*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C1D-2141-DY4H-K36P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 14, 2024 Tuesday 8:37 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 994 words

**Byline:** Andy Gregory

**Highlight:** More cases of families separated by new rules come to light, after The Independent revealed plight of parents unable to bring two-year-old daughter to UK

**Body**

The government has been urged to reconsider changes to its [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) refugee schemes that are keeping families apart – as more cases emerge of [*parents*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/parents) unable to bring their [*children*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/children) to the UK.

When the decision to close the Ukraine Family Scheme was implemented days before the two-year anniversary of Russia’s invasion, officials[*dismissed*](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/feb/19/closure-of-uk-family-scheme-for-ukrainians-described-as-cruel-move) widespread warnings the move would keep families apart as “cynical scaremongering”.

But these warnings have now come to pass, with [*The Independent revealing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/homes-for-ukraine-scheme-refugees-sunak-changes-b2538499.html) the case of parents who arrived under the Homes for Ukraine scheme in April 2022 now left unable to bring their two-year-old daughter from Kyiv, having finally secured suitable accommodation and set up a business in the UK.

While Oleksandra and Yaroslav’s application to sponsor their daughter Anna stated that they were her parents, the [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) rejected her visa request on 26 April on the grounds that her parents are not British or Irish citizens and have a time limit on their stay in the UK.

Have you been affected by this? Email [*andy.gregory@independent.co.uk*](mailto:andy.gregory@independent.co.uk)

The Home Office [*insisted to The Independent*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/homes-for-ukraine-scheme-refugees-sunak-changes-b2538499.html) that the Ukraine scheme rules have never prevented a child joining their family in the UK, and nor do the changes [*brought in overnight on 19 February*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/angus-macneil-minister-commons-government-home-office-b2499261.html) – prompting Lib Dem MP Alistair Carmichael to suggest that “they do not seem to understand their own rules”.

Further cases have now emerged of families rendered unable to join loved ones in Britain, in a report published by the Refugee Council and Safe Passage on Monday, in which the charities urged the government to reopen a pathway to reunite Ukrainians with temporary status in the UK with their close family.

In one case, a couple named Andrei and Mira originally came to the UK for seasonal work and both have temporary leave to remain under the Ukraine Extension Scheme – but say they now have no way to bring their two children – aged five and nine – to Britain.

Mira has returned to Ukraine as a result, living with her children in a village close to key infrastructure being targeted by Russian forces. The children can hear missiles and rockets, and a drone was recently shot down in the neighbouring fields, the report states.

The ongoing separation from Andrei is having a significant psychological impact on the family, with both children have become more withdrawn and their parents worried about their mental health, the report states. Andrei said the heartbreaking situation had left him feeling “very powerless”.

In a separate case, a teenager named Yulia lives close to the Russian border under the constant threat of bombing and shelling – with her family losing their home, no longer able to afford food and struggling to find jobs in a decimated economy, following an intensive Russian siege on their city.

Whilst Yulia’s family are unable to flee, Yulia is desperate to join her aunt Darina, who moved in with a British host family in 2022 with her son, and has now found private rental accommodation nearby. But following the changes to the Homes for Ukraine scheme in February, Darina would no longer be entitled to act as a sponsor, the report said.

In addition to cases in which parents have travelled ahead to get set up in the UK before sending for their children and are now unable to sponsor them, the charities said they were also aware of men who have been injured or demobilised after fighting in the war and are unable to join their wives and children in the UK.

Enver Solomon, chief executive of the [*Refugee Council*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugee-council) , said: “Families are often forcibly separated by the horrors of war and conflict, so it is unimaginably painful that refugee families, especially parents and children, are stopped from reuniting with their loved ones by the Home Office.

“The government rightly supported thousands of people affected by war and bloodshed in Ukraine to find safety here, and it has been incredible to witness communities up and down the country opening their arms to people from that conflict. However, the government’s policy change in February means that displaced Ukrainians in the UK now have no way to bring their family to join them in safety – not even their children or their partners.

“We urge the government to allow Ukrainians with temporary status in the UK to sponsor their close family members. Until they do, Ukrainians who have already suffered so much are being stopped from being with their loved ones and rebuilding their lives.”

Kate Smart, chief executive of the charity Settled – which is supporting two-year-old Anna’s parents in trying to bring her to the UK – said the new report relects Settled’s own caseload experience of Ukrainians being affected by the changes.

“We call for an urgent change to the rules, to reinstate the right of Ukrainians in the UK to sponsor close family members,” said Ms Smart. “The spirit of these humanitarian visas demands that children are allowed to join their parents.”

Labour peer Lord Alf Dubs, who arrived in the UK as a six-year-old fleeing the Nazis, told The Independent he found the situation “deeply shocking, because the government will notionally say they support the rights of [*family reunion*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/family-reunion) and then in practice they deny it”.

“This has happened over the years and this is just the latest example,” he said, adding: “I hope it’s not deliberate policy, but they’ve said if people don’t have refugee status or aren’t British citizens then they can’t join their family, so I’m not sure it’s a mistake. I would think that family reunion was absolutely fundamental to basic human rights.”

A Home Office spokesperson said: “We absolutely do not prevent a parent being joined by a child in the UK. The Ukraine scheme rules have never prevented this, nor do the changes prevent this.

“We continue to provide a safe and secure haven for those fleeing the ongoing conflict, whilst providing certainty and assurance for Ukrainians in the UK on their future as the war continues.”

**Load-Date:** May 14, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Monasteries, mafia properties, and earthquake cabins: Italy gets creative to house Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6522-KJK1-DY4H-K0V0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 21, 2022 Monday 6:56 PM GMT

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**Section:** WORLD,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:2

**Length:** 784 words

**Byline:** Sofia Barbarani

**Highlight:** The Italian government and volunteers have mobilised to accommodate the tens of thousands of refugees who are arriving from Ukraine after Russia's invasion, reports Sofia Barbarani in Rome

**Body**

Local governments in [*Italy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/italy) 's Marche region are calling for ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) to be housed in some of the emergency accommodations set up to shelter Italian families displaced by a series of deadly earthquakes in 2016.

With [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) now in its fourth week, nearly 3.5 million people have left the country and more than 50,000 of them have sought safety in Italy - including 25,846 women, 20,478 children and 4,325 men, according to the Italian interior ministry.

While most refugees are expected to resettle in major cities such as Milan, Rome, Naples, and Bologna, some have reached smaller towns and villages in Umbria, Marche, and northern Lazio, where six years ago a magnitude 6.0 earthquake devastated entire cities, uprooted tens of thousands and killed hundreds.

What was introduced by the Italian government as a temporary solution for homeless families lasted years, becoming a daily reminder of Italy's stagnant bureaucracy and failure to rebuild. For years, the rural landscape in these areas has been punctuated by wooden cabins and prefabricated homes.

This month, after years in limbo, 82 families in Amatrice left their emergency accommodation when they were handed the keys to what they hope will be their forever homes.

"Amatrice begins to have a home: we were all waiting for this moment, it's the start of normalization," mayor Giovanni Legnini said during a ceremony earlier this month.

But while some Italian families finally have a place to call home, millions of Ukrainians have just lost theirs.

"The reconstruction [of Italy's damaged town] has truly kicked off and so the first emergency homes have freed up, and the emotional wave fuelled by Russia's aggression has been so significant that it led mayors to make a brave decision," Guido Castelli, the head of reconstruction in the Marche region and former mayor of Ascoli Piceno, told The Independent.

Roughly 61 out of the approximately 1,900 emergency homes are free to house refugees, he explained.

"It's a symbolic number, but equally symbolic is the willingness by an already suffering community to welcome others that are suffering," said Mr Castelli, who is working with the regional mayors to bring this project to fruition.

The living costs will be funded by the state and with cabin sizes ranging from 40 to 80 square metres, families will not have to be separated.

"This population weakened and made fragile by the seismic sequence of 2016 hasn't stopped looking at those who are suffering," said Mr Castelli.

The government is expecting to welcome a minimum of 60,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** for roughly three months -taking in up to 175,000 in total. Family groups will receive approximately 600 to 900 euros a month, depending on the number of members.

The first bus reached the Slovenia-Italy border on 28 February, just four days after Russia's invasion. Approximately 50 people were on board, including two men and most said they were set to stay with family and friends in the north of the country, according to news agency ANSA.

But in a war that sees no sign of abating, the number of Ukrainians forced to flee will undoubtedly increase and will likely continue to need government help.

Italy's government and volunteers have mobilized across the peninsula to provide accommodation and safety for the tens of thousands. Private individuals and monasteries have opened their doors, abandoned homes are in the process of being fixed up, and homes are being rented by the state.

The interior ministry has also announced plans to convert properties seized from the mafia and convert them into temporary refugee housing centres. Last week, the head of the state unit that deals with confiscating such buildings said that 500 of them had been identified, yet stressed it was impossible to know how many would actually be used.

Many refugees are also staying with members of the already existing Ukrainian community in Italy -which is one of the largest in Europe. Before the conflict in Ukraine and ensuing exodus, the Mediterranean country was estimated to be home to about a quarter-of-a-million Ukrainians.

However, the head of the cultural association "Ukrainian Community Marche" warned that Italian families hosting refugees were beginning to feel the financial strain.

"There's no financial help from the local government for these families," said the president of the organization, who preferred not to give her name.

The solution, she said, was not to give families long-term accommodation, but to find them short-term homes in as little time as possible.

"It was different for the earthquake victims, they had nowhere to go," she said. "If the war ends, these people will go back home that same day."

**Load-Date:** March 21, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees in the UK who fled Putin’s war are turning to food banks amid soaring inflation*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66NG-26F1-DY4H-K4VJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

October 20, 2022 Thursday 4:43 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 692 words

**Byline:** Holly Bancroft

**Highlight:** Food prices in the UK have soared, with inflation for food and non-alcoholic beverages currently at 14.6 per cent

**Body**

[***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) in the [*UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk) are turning to [*food banks*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/food-banks) amid rising inflation and the struggle to find employment.

More than 148,300 Ukrainians have been granted sanctuary in the UK since the start of Vladimir Putin’s invasion, the latest government data up to June 2022 shows.

Yet 1,915 Ukrainian households who are homeless or at risk of homelessness have turned to English councils for help since 24 February -and some are having to rely on donations to help feed themselves.

At Kingston foodbank in London on Tuesday, 17-year-old Ukranian Vlad had come to get help with his mother Tetiana, 49.

Have you been affected by this story? If so email [*holly.bancroft@independent.co.uk*](mailto:holly.bancroft@independent.co.uk)

They were living locally with sponsors they had met through the Homes for Ukraine scheme and came to the foodbank to get groceries every two or three weeks.

Vlad, who is studying at Richmond college, had woken up at 6am to log in to his extra online classes with his school back in Ukraine.

His mother is going along to English courses so that she can convert her Ukrainian teaching diploma for use in the UK.

“We get Universal Credit for all of us, £800 a month,” Vlad, who also has a younger brother at primary school, told The Independent.

“The food prices here are nearly twice bigger than back in Ukraine so we want to save a bit by coming here. Prices in Ukraine even now are bigger than here.

“We’ve met quite a lot of Ukrainians here. There were already a few communities in Kingston,” he said.

The family is able to get free sim cards from a community bank nearby and they use the free wifi provided by their sponsors at home. Vlad’s father and aunt are still back in Ukraine and the family hope to return home when the war ends.

Food prices in the UK have soared over the past year, with inflation for food and non-alcoholic beverages currently at 14.6 per cent.

Another Ukrainian who was using the foodbank, a woman in her 20s, told The Independent that her sponsorship arrangement through the Homes for Ukraine scheme was ending in two weeks and she hadn’t been able to find a new place to stay.

She had worked for over 5 years in television media back in Ukraine but was struggling to find even low-skilled jobs in London.

During The Independent’s visit to the Kingston food bank on Tuesday, there were at least five Ukrainians who came to use the services and volunteer Jane said that they had a small group of regulars who came to get help.

One newcomer -who spoke little English and had been waiting for the doors to open at 10:30am -lit up when Jane welcomed her with the Ukrainian word for hello.

Kingston food bank is part of the Trussell Trust’s network of 1,300 food bank centres.[*The charity has launched an emergency appeal,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/food-banks-cost-of-living-crisis-inflation-b2206022.html) warning the soaring cost of living is “driving a tsunami of need”.

The organisation delivered 46 per cent more emergency food parcels in August and September this year compared to the same months in 2021.

Some 1.3 million emergency food packages, designed to feed a family with three days worth of meals, will be needed in the next six months, the charity said. This includes half a million for families with children.

Some councils have also decided to offer families hosting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** extra payments to cover rising bills, amid uncertainty about the government’s ongoing support for the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Gloucestershire County Council has said hosts will receive a £375 “thank you” bonus and an extra £100 a month for the second six months of the scheme. Hosts have received £350 a month so far.

In Hampshire, the council has said that it will pay residents hosting families an extra £200 per month for the next five months.

A government spokesperson said: “More than 138,400 Ukrainians have been welcomed to the UK since Putin’s invasion and the overwhelming majority of these have settled in well.

“All arrivals have access to benefits and employment from day one and we are giving hosts £350 thank you payments to cover any additional costs. Councils have a duty to ensure families are not left without a roof over their heads and we’re giving them £10,500 to provide this support.”

**Load-Date:** October 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees at risk of exploitation under UK's new sponsorship scheme, charities warn*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650J-98R1-DY4H-K0M7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 3:51 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 725 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Experts 'certain' some will view scheme as 'opportunity to turn a profit at expense of vulnerable individuals'

**Body**

Ministers have been warned that [***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) could be placed at risk of exploitation and abuse under its new sponsorship scheme.

Anti-[*trafficking*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/trafficking) charities say "red flags could be missed" in the vetting of potential hosts under the new programme, which will see people in the UK paid £350 per month to host refugees who have fled the Russian invasion.

Experts said they were "certain" that some people in the UK will view the scheme as an "opportunity to turn a profit at the expense of vulnerable individuals" - and that thorough checks must be carried out.

The programme was launched today by cabinet minister [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) , with a website set up to express interest in being a sponsor and the process of matching hosts to refugees to begin from Friday.

But campaigners urged caution over the scheme, warning that vulnerable people could end up being exploited by those who have offered to host them unless the government commits to "rigorous" safeguarding measures, including follow-up checks.

Lauren Agnew, human trafficking policy expert at Care (Christian Action Research and Education), said that while the scheme was "well-motivated and could benefit a great number of individuals", the logistics of it had to be "weighed carefully".

The Independent is raising money for the people of Ukraine - if you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

She continued: "With large numbers of applications needing to be processed quickly, red flags could be missed in the vetting of potential hosts.

"We can be certain that some of this number will be seeing the Homes for Ukraine scheme as an opportunity to turn a profit at the expense of vulnerable individuals seeking refuge in the UK.

"Setting refugees up in homes around the UK is not the end of the story. There must be follow-up checks to ensure these individuals are not being exploited. We must remember that refugees are extremely vulnerable. They must not be allowed to fall off the radar."

Daniel Sohege, director of pro-bono consultancy Stand For All, said the new scheme raised "a number of concerns" with the scheme, with the most significant risk being that it "increases the danger of refugees being exploited and even trafficked".

"We already see how a failure to provide proper specialist support puts, particularly children, at risk in hotels. This seems to multiply the issue," he said.

"Organisations that currently 'match' refugees to potential homes conduct multiple checks. The speed and scale of this scheme means it is nigh on impossible to properly carry out those checks."

Recent statistics from the National Crime Agency estimate there are at least 6,000-8,000 [*modern slavery*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/modern-slavery) offenders in the UK.

The government has said each host will be checked against the police national computer for security concerns, and that refugees will be registered with GPs and schools, where safeguarding checks will be carried out.

[*The Independent understands*](https://indy-web-prod.brightsites.co.uk/preview/bb4b8dad21523f73470e484e4fb13051?domain=independent.co.uk) that the new scheme will require all hosts to put forward the names of refugees they can sponsor, and is anticipating that charities will come forward and offer to facilitate the matching process.

Charities have warned that the need to put forward names could lead to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** without links to the UK being "excluded" from the programme.

The Home Office's Ukraine family scheme - a separate route which launched on 4 March - has so far issued 4,400 visas out of 32,400 applications that have been opened, meaning the UK is falling far short of the numbers of Ukrainians that other European countries have welcomed.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Johnson 'unlikely to house Ukrainian refugees at No 10 due to security risks'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650J-4KS1-DY4H-K0RB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 2:37 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 725 words

**Byline:** Geraldine Scott

**Highlight:** The Prime Minister's official spokesman said it is up to individual ministers whether they offer their help.

**Body**

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) is unlikely to take any ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** into No 10 under a new scheme to be set out on Monday due to security concerns.

The Prime Minister's official spokesman indicated that Mr Johnson will not be taking part in the programme, but said it is up to individual ministers whether they offer a place to stay for those fleeing the war in eastern Europe.

Transport Secretary [*Grant Shapps*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/grant-shapps) said his family will apply for the new programme, through which people in the UK can offer to host ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in their homes, while Communities Secretary [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) said he was considering the prospect.

Health Secretary [*Sajid Javid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sajid-javid) said it would be difficult for him to "offer the time".

Asked about Mr Johnson, who lives in the flat above No 11 Downing Street with his wife Carrie and two of his children, the PM's spokesman said: "There are specific challenges around security on housing people in No 10.

"Various ministers have been asked about this. Obviously it will come down to individual circumstances. This is a significant commitment."

Details of the scheme, which will see households paid £350 a month for putting up refugees for a minimum of six months, will be set out by Mr Gove later.

The Health Secretary said if help cannot be provided this way, there are other ways to offer support.

Mr Javid was asked on BBC Breakfast whether he would consider hosting refugees in his home.

"I'm starting to have a conversation with my wife on that and I think many households - as you say, and I'm pleased you brought this up - are probably thinking about this across the country," he said.

"It's important that anyone that becomes a host, that they can fulfil the obligations of a host, that they can spend time with these families and help, but there are many ways that we can all help and whatever I do at a personal level, I will most certainly be helping."

Mr Javid told LBC he has donated to the Disasters Emergency Committee appeal for Ukraine.

And he told ITV's Good Morning Britain: "I do think, for me personally, it will be hard to offer the time that I think a host would reasonably (be) expected to have available to help the family that's arriving, to help to integrate them into British society."

I strongly welcome the Government's Homes for Ukraine schemeI will be signing up and opening my home to support our Ukrainian friendsI urge everyone who is able to help to register and welcome a family in desperate needWe must stand with Ukraine - Matt Hancock (@MattHancock) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/MattHancock/status/1503376764466253832?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said he will apply to join the scheme.In a tweet, he said: "We've spent the past few weeks as a family discussing the devastating situation in Ukraine, and so we intend to apply today to join other UK households in offering our home to provide refuge to Ukrainians until it is safe for them to return to their country."On Sunday, Mr Gove was asked if he would take in a Ukrainian refugee.He told the BBC's Sunday Morning programme: "I'm exploring what I can do. I know that there are others who have. Without going into my personal circumstances, there are a couple of things I need to sort out - but yes."He said there are potentially "hundreds of thousands of people" in the UK willing to take Ukrainians into their homes.We've spent the past few weeks as a family discussing the devastating situation in Ukraine, and so we intend to apply today to join other UK households in offering our home to provide refuge to Ukrainians until it is safe for them to return to their country.- Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP (@grantshapps) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/grantshapps/status/1503345613987057668?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Mr Javid said it is a "sensible approach" to allow Britons to offer refugees places to stay.

"This is an unprecedented situation," he said. "There are, as we've seen across Europe, many millions of refugees and it's right that Britain plays its role and that we have a scheme that allows British families to play their part and to offer sanctuary."

Matt Hancock, Mr Javid's predecessor as health secretary, said he will "be signing up and opening my home to support our Ukrainian friends".

Asked if he would be willing to host a refugee, London mayor Sadiq Khan told Good Morning Britain: "Personally, we won't be able to because of space and other security issues, but I admire the generosity of those Londoners, and we know our city is a very generous city."

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Government-backed matching scheme opens to pair sponsors and Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:654C-45T1-DY4H-K2BS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 1, 2022 Friday 12:08 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:3

**Length:** 617 words

**Byline:** Jemma Crew

**Highlight:** Reset Communities and Refugees has launched a service to pair sponsors and refugees as well as providing safeguarding checks.

**Body**

The first Government-backed matching scheme has been launched to link UK sponsors with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, amid warnings that schemes helping people reach safety must not become "Tinder for sex traffickers".

Reset [*Communities*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/communities) and [*Refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) - a charity which has led UK community sponsorship schemes since 2018 - has launched a service to pair sponsors and refugees, provide training and carry out initial eligibility and safeguarding checks.

It has received £300,000 in initial funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

The charity launched the initial phase of the programme on Friday and hopes to scale up to match future demand.

It is the first and only matching scheme to receive [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) backing.

The service launched two weeks after the Government's [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine sponsorship scheme opened for visa applications from refugees with a named sponsor.

We must make sure that there are fair and rigorous systems in place to support the refugees and sponsors as they embark on this programme

Kate Brown, Reset Communities and Refugees

Some 4,700 visas have been granted, and 32,200 applications have been made under the scheme as of Thursday, according to Home Office figures.

More than 200,000 people have expressed an interest in opening their homes to a Ukrainian refugee under the scheme.

But there have been concerns that the matching aspect has led to people turning to strangers on social media, and being vulnerable to being exploited by potential human traffickers.

[*Kate Brown*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kate-brown) , chief executive of Reset Communities and Refugees, said: "This is an extraordinary moment for the refugee welcome movement in the UK.

"With 200,000 people signed up to offer their homes under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, and hundreds of thousands more offering support, we are in a position to help more refugees than ever before.

"We must make sure that there are fair and rigorous systems in place to support the refugees and sponsors as they embark on this programme."

Refugees Minister Lord Harrington added: "I am delighted and grateful that Reset are working with us to bring more people safely to the UK."

During the pilot phase of the scheme over the past few weeks, more than 7,000 refugees and 8,000 UK households - offering places for more than 20,000 refugees - have registered on the Reset website.

The service is intended for potential sponsors and refugees who do not have other means of pairing up.

Refugees who have found sponsors through other means - such as via other charities, online and local groups - will still be able to apply for visas separately via the Government website without having to go through the Reset service.

Under the scheme, trained caseworkers and volunteers will assess sponsors' intent, suitability, availability and appropriateness of the accommodation they can offer.

They will also assess refugees to see if they have particular needs or have ties to a particular area, and sponsors will need to undergo an online training course.

The charity did not say how long it expects the matching process to take, but said it is aware of the urgency and is "working as fast as we can to enable matches".

When a match has been made, refugees will need to submit their visa application via the Government website, after which the Government and local authorities will conduct formal vetting and checks.

The charity will also provide ongoing training, advice and support for sponsors and local authorities, drawing on the expertise of the charity Refugees at Home.

This will provide advice on how to support refugees who need help with learning English, getting children into schools, accessing health care, registering for benefits and finding employment.

**Load-Date:** April 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Process to house Ukrainian refugees in Northern Ireland may take only 'hours'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651D-62P1-DY4H-K53B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 18, 2022 Friday 3:29 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 484 words

**Byline:** Ted Hennessey

**Highlight:** Over 6,000 people in Northern Ireland have signed up for the UK Government's Homes for Ukraine programme.

**Body**

The process to house ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in [*Northern Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/northern-ireland) may only take "hours" to complete, senior [*Stormont*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/stormont) officials have said.

Over 6,000 people in Northern Ireland have signed up for the UK Government's [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine programme. This allows individuals, charities, community groups and businesses to bring people escaping the war to safety - even if they have no ties to the UK.

It means a "substantial" number of people could be housed in the country, with estimates suggesting the figure could reach at least 9,000 if the UK takes 10% of those fleeing the country.

Senior officials from the Executive Office (TEO) said on Friday afternoon: "We're working on the basis that this will be significantly larger and more complex than the Syrian refugee scheme where we welcomed and settled over 2,000 refugees on a staggered and planned basis."

It's just me guessing off the top of my head, but I think the key message from the Home Office is this is not going to be an elongated process, it is a genuinely truncated process compared with foreign visa arrangements

TEO official

Anyone with a room or home available for at least six months can offer it to a Ukrainian individual or a family, although those offering to host will be vetted and Ukrainian applicants will undergo security checks.

It was said that schemes will take a personal and family-centred approach, ensuring refugees are treated with respect, allowing them equal access to public services and ensuring they can learn English to properly integrate.

Ukrainians will be asked for their details, including whether they have a criminal record, much like a visa application.

Asked how long the process will take, a TEO official told journalists: "We're hearing suggestions that it certainly won't be weeks, it will be more in days, possibly hours.

"It's just me guessing off the top of my head, but I think the key message from the [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) is this is not going to be an elongated process, it is a genuinely truncated process compared with foreign visa arrangements."

The first - launching on Friday - will allow UK sponsors to nominate a named Ukrainian or family to stay with them in their home or in a separate property.

The Government is working with a number of charities and NGOs to work out the best way to match people who are not yet connected with Ukrainians. There is no limit to how many people can apply.

Another TEO official said: "Safeguarding is clearly of supreme importance and all of us and the Home Office will be doing a standard DBS check.

"We will be following up quickly with further checks, more advanced checks with visitors to ensure that their premises and the accommodation is suitable.

"Really importantly we recognise there will be bumps in the road down the line in some of these relationships and we want to be in a position to be able to support people to work through those, so the safeguarding aspect is is key."

**Load-Date:** March 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Charles: I'm praying for you he tells Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67WY-4521-JCS0-D2JY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 31, 2023 Friday

Second Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 11

**Length:** 459 words

**Byline:** TONY JONES

**Body**

The King yesterday told Ukrainians "I'm praying for you" after condemning the "unimaginable suffering" caused by President Vladimir Putin's invasion of their homeland.

Charles met families who escaped to Germany after he praised the nation's "courageous, important and appreciated" decision to send "significant" military support to Ukraine in a historic address to the Bundestag.

At Berlin's old Tegel Airport the King met recently arrived Ukrainians, a few of more than a million who have sought refuge in the country, and in a lighter moment played table football with some of the group.

On several occasions Charles clasped his hands together and told refugees "I'm praying for you". The King made history by delivering the first speech by a British monarch during a session of the Bundestag.

He told the packed chamber: "The unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has inflicted the most unimaginable suffering on so many innocent people.

"Countless lives have been destroyed; freedom and human dignity have been trampled in the most brutal way. The security of Europe has been threatened, together with our democratic values.

"The world has watched in horror - but we have not stood by. Even as we abhor the appalling scenes of destruction, we can take heart from our unity - in defence of Ukraine, of peace and freedom.

"Germany and the United Kingdom have shown vital leadership. As Europe's two largest donors to Ukraine, we have responded with taking decisions which might previously have seemed unimaginable. Germany's decision to send such significant military support to Ukraine is remarkably courageous, important and appreciated."

Charles was given a tour of the Ukraine Arrival Centre by German president Frank-Walter Steinmeier and stopping to speak to families registering after just arriving, asked: "Was it very difficult to get out of Ukraine? Are you pleased to be here?"

Charles, who is midway through a state visit to Germany with the Queen Consort, took up the offer of a game of table football in the refugee centre's games room and joked: "I remember trying this when I was younger."

But when he conceded a goal, he replied: "Amazing, two hands you are the experts."

Speaking afterwards through a translator Olena Ochkiviska, 40, said: "I told him everyone was caring after us and they are working on the negatives. He said that he was praying for us all. I'm the luckiest lady in the world."

Kleopatra Tummler, operations manager of the refugee centre, who also worked 15 years as Take That's tour manager, said afterwards: "He really showed interest in everyone's stories.

"He learned that some said there were not enough cellars in Ukraine for people to hide. There was a family who had just arrived and registered here who he stopped to talk to."

PA

**Load-Date:** March 30, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Archbishops unite to press UK government on visas for Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6510-7RH1-DY4H-K2XR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 16, 2022 Wednesday 3:16 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 536 words

**Byline:** David Young

**Highlight:** The all-Ireland primates of the Catholic Church and Church of Ireland came together to urge London to follow the lead of EU nations and waive visas.

**Body**

Senior church leaders on the island of [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) have called on the UK Government to do more to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

The all-Ireland primates of the [*Catholic Church*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/catholic-church) and Church of Ireland came together to urge [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london) to follow the lead of EU nations and waive visas for those fleeing the conflict.

Delivering a joint message in Armagh ahead of St Patrick's Day, Catholic [*Archbishop*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/archbishop) Eamon Martin and Church of Ireland Archbishop [*John*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/john) McDowell encouraged people across the island to consider welcoming Ukrainians into their homes.

It would be terrible if bureaucracy was another barrier in front of these people who must be awfully traumatised at the moment

Archbishop Eamon Martin

While the Republic of Ireland as an EU member state has waived visa requirements for Ukrainians, with no limit on arrivals, the UK has taken a different approach, setting up a visa sponsorship scheme where people can offer to accommodate refugees.

The number of Ukrainians entering the UK will depend on the response to the scheme, which saw 100,000 sponsors sign up on the first day alone.

Catholic Archbishop Eamon Martin raised concern about issues that might emerge from having different approaches on both sides of the Irish border.

"We were very pleased to note how quickly many of the European governments immediately pledged their support for refugees and indeed in Ireland the waiving of the visas and we have called upon the UK Government to be equally generous," he said.

"I think, personally, that more could be done at government level in the United Kingdom. I also think we need to look at the cross-border situation. There will be people arriving south of the border who may wish to travel north. I think these are complex issues and I would really be encouraging our elected leaders to take a look at these situations and do what we can.

"It would be terrible if bureaucracy was another barrier in front of these people who must be awfully traumatised at the moment."

The Home Office is not a notoriously sympathetic department and has maybe difficulty processing these matter

Archbishop John McDowell

Asked by reporters if he thought the UK Government was not doing enough, Archbishop McDowell said:

"I think rather than saying it should have done more, it's to urge it to do more now.

"The Home Office is not a notoriously sympathetic department and has maybe difficulty processing these matters. But we would certainly urge them to do at least as much as other countries in the European Union and others all around the world and to do that with good grace and a good heart and quickly so that people who are already extraordinarily anxious don't have a further anxiety added when they're coming to the borders."

Archbishop Martin added: "I think at the end of the day, governments will be moved by the will of the people. I have noticed over the last few weeks, people are deeply disturbed by what they're seeing (in Ukraine), they instinctively want to reach out to help and they will look to their elected representatives to make that possible.

"So I certainly would join with Archbishop John and others in the many Christian churches on these islands who have been calling for more action from the United Kingdom government."

**Load-Date:** March 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*How Mila Kunis's family left Ukraine for the US, as she launches fundraiser for Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650J-G551-JBNF-W0KB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 4:26 PM GMT

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**Section:** AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 577 words

**Byline:** Clémence Michallon

**Highlight:** Kunis was born in 1983 in Chernivtsi, a city in southwestern Ukraine

**Body**

When actor [*Mila Kunis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mila-kunis) was seven, her family left [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , her native country, and moved to the US.

"It was right at the fall [of the Soviet Union]," Kunis, who has now started a [*fundraiser*](https://www.gofundme.com/f/stand-with-ukraine) to support ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, told the [*Los Angeles Times*](https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2008-oct-16-et-mila16-story.html) in 2008. "It was very communist, and my parents wanted my brother and me to have a future, and so they just dropped everything. They came with $250."

Kunis was born in 1983 in the city of Chernivtsi in southwestern Ukraine to Mark and Elvira Kunis, respectively a mechanical engineer and a physics teacher.

Once in the US, her father "did odd jobs - painting houses, installing toilets and delivering pizza - while her mother worked in the back room of a Thrifty drugstore", the LA Times reported.

Kunis has said she initially struggled to adapt to the US as a child. Her native language was Russian, and she didn't speak English when her family emigrated.

"Ultimately, I adjusted fairly quickly and fairly well," Kunis told the LA Times. "But it must have been hard, because I blocked out second grade completely. I have no recollection of it. I always talk to my mom and my grandma about it. It was because I cried every day. I didn't understand the culture. I didn't understand the people. I didn't understand the language."

She lated described the experience in an essay she wrote to get into college, urging the reader to "imagine being blind and deaf at age seven."

"That's kind of what it felt like moving to the States," Kunis added in her conversation with the LA Times. "But I got over it pretty fast."

Kunis took acting classes as a child and got her first television credit in 1994 in the soap opera Days of Our Lives. Appearances in programmes such as Baywatch and 7th Heaven followed, and in 1998 she joined the cast of That '70s Show. (Also starring in the series was Ashton Kutcher, whom Kunis married in 2015).

Kunis also forged a career on the film side, which has included roles in Forgetting Sarah Marshall (2008), Black Swan (2010), Friends with Benefits (2011), and The Spy Who Dumped Me (2018). She will play the lead role in the upcoming Netflix adaptation of Jessica Knoll's bestselling novel Luckiest Girl Alive.

In a video released on Thursday, Kunis announced she and Kutcher had launched a fundraiser to support Ukraine amid Russia's invasion of the country.

She aid she has always considered herself "a proud American - I love everything that this country has done for myself and my family, but today I have never been more proud to be a Ukrainian."

"Ukrainians are proud and brave people who deserve our help in their time of need," she wrote in a statement. "This unjust attack on Ukraine and humanity at large is devastating and the Ukrainian people need our support."

Kunis and Kutcher will match donations to the newly created fund up to $3m.

"While we are witnessing the bravery of Ukrainians, we are also bearing witness to the unimaginable burden of those who have chosen safety," Kunis added. "Countless amounts of people have left everything they know and love behind to seek refuge. With nothing but what they could carry, these ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are in need of housing and supplies right away."

Donations will go towards two organisations: Flexport.org, which coordinates shipments of supplies to refugees in Poland, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, and Moldova; and Airbnb.org, an independent nonprofit which works with Airbnb to provide free, short-term housing to refugees fleeing Ukraine.

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Football manager turned provost on mission to help Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6556-B3P1-DY4H-K1DV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 5, 2022 Tuesday 7:53 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 217 words

**Byline:** Katrine Bussey

**Highlight:** Jim Leishman is delivering aid to Poland to help those fleeing the war in Ukraine.

**Body**

A former football manager is helping to deliver humanitarian aid to refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine.

Jim Leishman, who had two spells as the manager of [*Scottish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scottish) side Dunfermline FC before becoming the Provost of Fife, is part of a group from the area who are driving to [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) with supplies for those escaping the conflict.

He said local volunteers had been "working for ages to put this humanitarian aid together".

He then spoke to a council colleague and "asked if I could help in any way" and said that had resulted in him joining the trip.

I would hate that one day my family had to pack a bag and flee from my village and I am left with my son to stand and fight the enemy

Jim Leishman, Provost of Fife

Organisers have collected "medical supplies, nappies, bandages, shoes for the kids and adults, everything you can imagine", he said.

It is now being taken to Poland in two minibuses and two vans.

Mr Leishman told BBC Radio Scotland's Good Morning Scotland programme that the situation in Ukraine was "horrendous", with "people of all ages being killed and shot".

He said: "That is why the local community has responded to this.

"I would hate that one day my family had to pack a bag and flee from my village and I am left with my son to stand and fight the enemy.

"I would hate to be in that position."

**Load-Date:** April 5, 2022

**End of Document**



[*How Mila Kunis's family left Ukraine for the US, as she launches fundraiser for Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6504-5WN1-JBNF-W2TY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 12, 2022 Saturday 2:39 PM GMT

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**Section:** AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 577 words

**Byline:** Clémence Michallon

**Highlight:** Kunis was born in 1983 in Chernivtsi, a city in southwestern Ukraine

**Body**

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**Load-Date:** March 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*How Mila Kunis's family left Ukraine for the US, as she launches fundraiser for Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y6-C2D1-JBNF-W1V4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 8:16 PM GMT

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**Section:** AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 591 words

**Byline:** Clémence Michallon

**Highlight:** Kunis was born in 1983 in Chernivtsi, a city in southwestern Ukraine

**Body**

When actor [*Mila Kunis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mila-kunis) was seven, her family left [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , her native country, and moved to the US.

"It was right at the fall [of the Soviet Union]," Kunis, who has now started a [*fundraiser*](https://www.gofundme.com/f/stand-with-ukraine) to support ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, told the [*Los Angeles Times*](https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2008-oct-16-et-mila16-story.html) in 2008. "It was very communist, and my parents wanted my brother and me to have a future, and so they just dropped everything. They came with $250."

Kunis was born in 1983 in the city of Chernivtsi in southwestern Ukraine to Mark and Elvira Kunis, respectively a mechanical engineer and a physics teacher.

Once in the US, her father "did odd jobs - painting houses, installing toilets and delivering pizza - while her mother worked in the back room of a Thrifty drugstore", the LA Times reported.

Kunis has said she initially struggled to adapt to the US as a child. Her native language was Russian, and she didn't speak English when her family emigrated.

"Ultimately, I adjusted fairly quickly and fairly well," Kunis told the LA Times. "But it must have been hard, because I blocked out second grade completely. I have no recollection of it. I always talk to my mom and my grandma about it. It was because I cried every day. I didn't understand the culture. I didn't understand the people. I didn't understand the language."

She lated described the experience in an essay she wrote to get into college, urging the reader to "imagine being blind and deaf at age seven."

"That's kind of what it felt like moving to the States," Kunis added in her conversation with the LA Times. "But I got over it pretty fast."

Kunis took acting classes as a child and got her first television credit in 1994 in the soap opera Days of Our Lives. Appearances in programmes such as Baywatch and 7th Heaven followed, and in 1998 she joined the cast of That '70s Show. (Also starring in the series was Ashton Kutcher, whom Kunis married in 2015).

Kunis also forged a career on the film side, which has included roles in Forgetting Sarah Marshall (2008), Black Swan (2010), Friends with Benefits (2011), and The Spy Who Dumped Me (2018). She will play the lead role in the upcoming Netflix adaptation of Jessica Knoll's bestselling novel Luckiest Girl Alive.

In a video released on Thursday, Kunis announced she and Kutcher had launched a fundraiser to support Ukraine amid Russia's invasion of the country.

She aid she has always considered herself "a proud American - I love everything that this country has done for myself and my family, but today I have never been more proud to be a Ukrainian."

"Ukrainians are proud and brave people who deserve our help in their time of need," she wrote in a statement. "This unjust attack on Ukraine and humanity at large is devastating and the Ukrainian people need our support."

Kunis and Kutcher will match donations to the newly created fund up to $3m.

"While we are witnessing the bravery of Ukrainians, we are also bearing witness to the unimaginable burden of those who have chosen safety," Kunis added. "Countless amounts of people have left everything they know and love behind to seek refuge. With nothing but what they could carry, these ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are in need of housing and supplies right away."

Donations will go towards two organisations: Flexport.org, which coordinates shipments of supplies to refugees in Poland, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, and Moldova; and Airbnb.org, an independent nonprofit which works with Airbnb to provide free, short-term housing to refugees fleeing Ukraine.

The [*fundraiser*](https://www.gofundme.com/f/stand-with-ukraine) has a stated goal of $30m. It had raised $3.4m as of Friday morning.

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Fears over Facebook pages where Ukrainian refugees 'advertise' to find UK host*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6526-63B1-F072-441J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 22, 2022 Tuesday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 6

**Length:** 924 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have started to "advertise" themselves on social media in a bid to find hosts in the UK, prompting concerns that the programme could expose vulnerable people to abuse.

A swathe of unregulated Facebook pages have been set up designed to "match" people who have fled Ukraine and hope to find a temporary home in Britain with UK residents who are willing to house them.

In many cases young women are posting photographs of themselves, sometimes with their children, on the public Facebook groups appealing for an offer of housing from people in the UK, to which any Facebook user can reply.

The government launched the sponsorship scheme on Friday, with the application page stating that Ukrainian nationals and their family members may apply only if they have a "named sponsor".

The scheme will allow Ukrainians with no family links to come to the UK and be hosted by members of the public, who will be paid £350 per month for sharing their homes. More than 150,000 people have so far registered their interest in hosting refugees who have fled Ukraine.

There is no official mechanism or portal by which refugees and prospective hosts can be linked up. When announcing the scheme last week, minister for levelling up Michael Gove saidhe hoped individuals and community groups would be able to "match" with refugees using social media, adding that charities would help with the process.

The Independent has discovered at least a dozen Facebook pages that have subsequently been set up designed to enable this matching process, many of which already have thousands of members. They are filled with posts by both prospective hosts advertising their offer of accommodation and ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** appealing for housing.

Jenni Regan, chief executive at iMix, which represents refugee and asylum charities in the UK, said the emergence of the Facebook groups threw up "a lot of issues", describing the approach as "almost like a Tinder for people traffickers".

"Many of the Ukrainians seeking refuge are young women who are already incredibly vulnerable. It feels like protections against sexual exploitation and violence have been completely forgotten, which is terrifying. We know that this has already been a problem for those leaving Ukraine and travelling into neighbouring countries," she said.

Ms Regan said the charity was also seeing potential hosts from the UK get "frustrated" when offers of help are rejected.

She added: "We noted that one user claimed it was like a bidding war with far more supply than demand and with a bias towards people wanting to be hosted in London. We are seeing the goodwill of the British public being eroded by the process.

"There are also several unregulated sites that have popped up over the weekend offering to match people. If people are drawn to these in favour of those backed by charities with experience and knowledge of resettlement, such as the Reset Homes for Ukraine site, we could soon see the process become commercialised with people paying for a service which is currently free."

Explaining that there was also evidence of scammers potentially using the scheme, Ms Regan said: "To apply for the scheme both sides must provide information such as passports and bills. In the wrong hands, this data could be gold dust for potential identity theft."

The government has said that any sponsor wishing to house Ukrainians will be subject to Home Office checks before any visa is issued, with adults in the house of a sponsor required to complete DBS checks and an enhanced DBS check for families hosting children or vulnerable adults.

But ministers are being urged by charities to work with the third sector to go further and create an "official, central" way of matching people hoping to use the scheme.

Lauren Agnew, trafficking policy expert at CARE (Christian Action Research and Education), said that while it was "heartening" to see the "generous" response from people across the UK keen to play their part in supporting refugees, the potential problems with the approach being taken could "not be ignored".

"The government may not be endorsing hosts seeking out refugees to sponsor on social media, but the current system will nevertheless create an environment for this to happen.A system allowing the public to identify refugees to host presents an opportunity to bad actors seeking to take advantage of them," she said.

"Already, we are seeing unregulated groups and accounts springing up on social media.Human traffickers can masquerade on these sites as genuine individuals wanting to help when, in reality, they are online to 'shop' for their next victims to exploit.How can Ukrainians know groups or individuals presenting on social media are genuine and safe?"

Ms Agnew said it was the government's job to "close those gaps before any harm is done", and called on ministers to "work with expert groups to identify what action is needed".

"It is also incredibly important that the government uses its channels to urge refugees not to interact with groups and private individuals on social media. Instead, they should seek help through official websites affiliated to the government or reputable NGOs," she added.

A spokesperson for the department for levelling up, said: "All those offering to house Ukrainians will be subject to Home Office checks before any visa is issued.

"Adults in the house of a sponsor will also be required to complete DBS checks, with an enhanced DBS with barred list check for families hosting children or vulnerable adults. We will keep these checks under review."

**Load-Date:** March 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ben Stiller arrives in Poland to meet Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65R1-N1T1-DY4H-K280-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 18, 2022 Saturday 5:07 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 293 words

**Byline:** Alex Green

**Highlight:** The actor said he hoped to ‘share stories that illustrate the human impact of war and to amplify calls for solidarity’.

**Body**

[*Ben Stiller*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ben-stiller) has arrived in [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) to meet refugees forced to flee Ukraine following the Russian invasion.

The actor, 56, was pictured in the large south-eastern city of Rzeszow, close to the border, speaking to aid workers in a storage facility.

Millions have crossed over into Poland since the war began in February.

Just arrived in Poland, ahead of [*#WorldRefugeeDay*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/WorldRefugeeDay?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) with [*@Refugees*](https://twitter.com/Refugees?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) to meet people who’s lives have been impacted by the war in [*#Ukraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Ukraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). [*https://t.co/1oUVrZpsBy*](https://t.co/1oUVrZpsBy) — Ben Stiller (@BenStiller) [*June 18, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BenStiller/status/1538105446208356353?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Stiller, who is a goodwill ambassador for [*UNHCR*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/unhcr) – the UN refugee agency, posted on [*Twitter*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/twitter) as he arrived in the country on Saturday.

He said: “I’ve just arrived in Poland with UNHCR, to meet families whose lives have been torn apart by war and violence in Ukraine.

“Millions have been forced to flee their homes with over 90% being women and children.

“I’m here to learn, to share stories that illustrate the human impact of war and to amplify calls for solidarity.

“I hope you’ll follow along and share your own messages of support, for people who have fled their homes in Ukraine and for people who have been forced to flee all over the world.

“Everyone has the right to seek safety. Whoever, wherever, whenever.”

Zoolander and Night At The Museum star Stiller’s presence in Poland comes ahead of World Refugee Day on June 20.

He started working with the UNHCR in 2016 and has travelled with the body to meet refugees in Germany, Jordan, Guatemala and Lebanon.

He is not the first celebrity to involve themselves in humanitarian work for Ukraine, with [*Mila Kunis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mila-kunis) and Ashton Kutcher raising 35 million US dollars for the country and David Beckham handing over his Instagram page to a Ukrainian doctor in Kharkiv for the day.

**Load-Date:** June 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*How Mila Kunis's family left Ukraine for the US, as she launches fundraiser for Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XF-DX81-JBNF-W4F9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 4, 2022 Friday 8:08 PM GMT

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**Section:** AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 591 words

**Byline:** Clémence Michallon

**Highlight:** Kunis was born in 1983 in Chernivtsi, a city in southwestern Ukraine

**Body**

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Kunis also forged a career on the film side, which has included roles in Forgetting Sarah Marshall (2008), Black Swan (2010), Friends with Benefits (2011), and The Spy Who Dumped Me (2018). She will play the lead role in the upcoming Netflix adaptation of Jessica Knoll's bestselling novel Luckiest Girl Alive.

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**Load-Date:** March 4, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Julian Lennon performs father's song 'Imagine' for the first time to raise funds for Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:656G-G9R1-DY4H-K1G6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 11, 2022 Monday 9:52 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,MUSIC,CULTURE; Version:2

**Length:** 342 words

**Byline:** Peony Hirwani

**Highlight:** 'Within this song, we're transported to a space, where love and togetherness become our reality, if but for a moment in time,' Julian Lennon said

**Body**

[*John Lennon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/john-lennon) 's son Julian has performed his father's song "Imagine" to raise funds for the ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

On Saturday (9 April), Julian sang the famous song as part of the Global Citizen's social media rally, Stand Up for Ukraine.

In the past, the 59-year-old singer had vowed to never perform his father's song. However, the "unimaginable tragedy" compelled him to "respond in the most significant way I could".

"So today, for the first time ever, I publicly performed my Dad's song, 'Imagine'," Julian wrote on Instagram, along with a video of him singing the track.

"Why now, after all these years?" he added. "I had always said, that the only time I would ever consider singing 'Imagine' would be if it was the 'End of the World' but also because his lyrics reflect our collective desire for peace worldwide.

"Because within this song, we're transported to a space, where love and togetherness become our reality, if but for a moment in time."

The Valotte singer also called upon "world leaders and everyone who believes in the sentiment of 'Imagine', to stand up for refugees everywhere!"

View this post on Instagram [*A post shared by Julian Lennon (@julespicturepalace)*](https://www.instagram.com/tv/CcGJArDlNdK/?utm_source=ig_embed&utm_campaign=loading)

Lennon released "Imagine" in 1971. The song was inspired heavily by artist Yoko Ono, who used the word in many of her 1960s conceptual artworks.

In 2017, [*Ono received a songwriting credit on "Imagine".*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/news/yoko-one-imagine-john-lennon-songwriting-credit-the-beatles-sean-lennon-a7790896.html) It was earned at the annual meeting of the National Music Publishers Association in New York after receiving the Centennial Song award for the legendary track alongside Sean Ono Lennon.

After accepting the award, NMPA CEO David Israelite showed a video showing the former Beatle's exclamation that his wife deserved the credit because of her influence and inspiration in bringing the song to life.

After the event, Israelite confirmed to [*Variety*](http://variety.com/2017/biz/news/yoko-ono-to-receive-songwriting-credit-on-john-lennon-imagine-1202466645/) that the process to officially add Yoko's credit to "Imagine" was "already under way" despite being aware the decision may face opposition.

**Load-Date:** April 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*The government's sponsorship scheme for Ukrainian refugees is radical - and not without risk*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6502-3811-JBNF-W420-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 12, 2022 Saturday 1:28 AM GMT

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**Section:** EDITORIALS,VOICES; Version:1

**Length:** 793 words

**Byline:** Editorial

**Highlight:** Editorial: For the first time, private British citizens will be able to officially 'sponsor' a complete stranger to come and share their home, apparently for a period of at least six months

**Body**

After chaos comes innovation, of sorts. Ever since the Russians invaded [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) - an eventuality the intelligence services were warning about for weeks in advance - ministers have found themselves scrambling to devise suitable ways of getting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** safely to Britain (or not, all too often) and playing catch-up with the remarkable wave of public sympathy for the plight of the Ukrainian people.

As home secretary for a party that has spent more than a decade creating hostile environments and erecting bureaucratic obstacles to offering shelter to those in need, suddenly [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) has had to contort her usual scowls and smirks into a warm, beaming face of welcome. Or rather, she will have to bite her lip while Michael Gove, who has been given responsibility for this part of Ms Patel's usual brief, gets on with delivering it.

Even now, after some hasty U-turns, the schemes are not yet in place, and once they are they may prove inadequate to the challenge, just as in the past. But one, the sponsorship scheme, looks to be one of the most radical social experiments tried by any government since the end of the Second World War.

Charities, businesses and community groups will be able to volunteer to help house and feed refugees, and find them useful work. For the first time, private British citizens will be able to officially "sponsor" a complete stranger to come and share their home, apparently for a period of at least six months.

To give the government credit, the usual counterproductive restrictions on asylum seekers are being lifted (begging the question of what makes the Ukrainians so special). Once in Britain, the ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** will be permitted to work (for pay) as well as being eligible for social security and NHS care. It is a better offer.

There are some obvious questions, though.

How, for example, will Mr Gove's Department for Levelling Up organise this new matchmaking function, allocating refugees to different households? Who's going to do the promised vetting, on both sides? How will they police the conditions the refugees will be housed in?

What is there in place to prevent economic exploitation, and worse, of these vulnerable people, who will be predominantly women and children? What happens if things go wrong? After the six months is up, then what? Is there to be a route to permanent settlement?

Ministers - as well as those individuals and families confident enough to participate in the scheme - need to have some workable ground rules and sources of advice and help. The Ukrainians have fled a war zone, left partners and families behind, may not speak good English, and will have been traumatised. It will not simply be a matter of showing them where the spare room is.

There is also the danger that the sponsorship scheme will feel a touch condescending. Worse still, it may provide a new battleground in Britain's unending culture wars, with every liberal celebrity and opposition politician asked about precisely how many Ukrainians they will be allowing to live in their big houses, with the depressingly predictable charge of "hypocrisy" not far behind.

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment sign up to our free weekly Voices Dispatches newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

Elements of the press will no doubt pursue those refugees sharing the Starmer or Cooper-Balls households to find out how things are going. And some places, sadly, will be hostile to the newcomers.

For a government with little inclination to devote resources to caring for refugees, or to spend money on putting them up in hotels or hostels, the notion of tapping up the public's generosity for a low-cost solution at the same time as being seen to "do the right thing" must be very tempting.

It is, though, the privatisation of compassion - and it wrongly limits the extent of the unqualified, and unlimited, legal and moral obligation to offer assistance to those seeking asylum. Whatever else, it is not a long-term solution to the challenge Europe faces.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Some Ukrainian refugees face homelessness after arriving in Scotland, MSPs told*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:658M-HKM1-DY4H-K18S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 21, 2022 Thursday 11:59 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 683 words

**Byline:** Hannah Carmichael

**Highlight:** Holyrood's Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee took evidence from local authority representatives on Thursday.

**Body**

There have been instances of people who have fled Ukraine ending up homeless in [*Scotland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scotland) , [*MSPs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/msps) have heard.

The crisis in the war-torn country was discussed by Holyrood's Constitution, [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) , External Affairs and Culture Committee on Thursday, with MSPs hearing from local authority representatives.

The committee was told that while there is a "really strong structure" in place for resettling refugees, there have been cases already where difficulties in securing suitable accommodation has led to them presenting as homeless.

Cosla policy manager Gayle Findlay said the problems with the family visa structure have not necessarily arisen from breakdowns of relationships between family members, but rather from issues such as a lack of space to accommodate them.

The only route for those people whose placements break down is to present as homeless within their local authority area

Gayle Findlay, Cosla

She added that basic factors, such as the person finding they are allergic to pets in the household, can also contribute to the problem.

Ms Findlay said: "Currently, unfortunately, the only route for those people whose placements break down, or they're unable to stay with their family, is to present as homeless within their local authority area that they may be in."

She said the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine scheme, operating under a visa-driven system, means people can arrive in Scotland just as the local authority hosting them receives the information required to identify suitable housing - putting pressure on councils.

This was echoed by Hazel Chisholm, housing policy officer for Highland Council, who told the committee her local authority has already identified someone as homeless after their placement broke down.

She said: "We've already had one of our placements fail after just a couple of days, and there's real concern that those guests didn't present in Highland.

"They actually travelled through to, I believe, Renfrewshire and found accommodation with some friends and are going to be travelling to England."

Pat Togher, from the Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership, said such a situation is one that has been given "quite considerable thought", but he said it is "unlikely we would be able to mitigate against that in its entirety".

Ms Chisholm suggested the situation is "not in control", with some councils reporting having been contacted by people who are already in Scotland.

She pointed out that with the coronavirus pandemic still ongoing, teams set up to identify available housing have been hit by staff illness, further causing delay to the process.

The impact of staff shortages on timeframes, Ms Chisholm added, is a particular issue in her local authority, which covers a vast area and houses needing to be surveyed are often in very rural locations.

"Sometimes we've been contacted by families who were hosting to say 'my family is already here', and the data will maybe arrive on the same day, so we've people in properties we haven't property checked, and we're not in control of that," she told MSPs.

Neil Gray, the minister with special responsibility for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving in Scotland, told MSPs on Wednesday that there has been "anecdotal evidence" of people having to return to Ukraine as a result of delays to visa processing.

Ms Findlay said there is "frustration" among people involved in the rehoming process due to confusion over who is operating the Homes for Ukraine system.

She said: "I think there is very little information in general for lots of people because we're working at pace, almost retrofitting systems to a scheme that's already been established."

A UK Government spokesperson said: "The Ukraine Family Scheme has helped more than 32,000 people fleeing the barbaric invasion of Ukraine, enabling them to be reunited with family in the UK.

"Our expectation is people arriving through the family scheme will be initially supported by their loved ones, so they can find work and integrate into the UK. In the exceptional case that someone is left without support from their families, they will be able to access local council support."

**Load-Date:** April 21, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Twelve-year-old woodwork star raises more than £66,000 for Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:655G-0681-DY4H-K3FT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 6, 2022 Wednesday 6:22 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 523 words

**Byline:** Lottie Kilraine

**Highlight:** The winner of Gabriel's Bowl For Ukraine raffle will be announced on Easter Sunday.

**Body**

A 12-year-old boy, who went viral online for his woodworking skills, has raised over £66,000 for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** after thousands of people entered a raffle to win one of his handmade bowls.

Gabriel Clark, from [*Cumbria*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cumbria) , launched his Bowl For Ukraine raffle on Saturday and within 48 hours had already raised over £60,000 for charity.

The one-off wooden bowl, which is etched with a blue-and-yellow ring in the colours of the Ukrainian flag, is currently going for £66,301 and the funds will be donated to Save the Children's appeal to help families affected by the war.

"I originally wanted to raise £5,000 and this has just blown that out the water, I'm amazed," Gabriel said.

"I really hope that everyone's generosity can help children affected by the war in Ukraine, by providing them with food, water, shelter, and safe places to learn and play."

Gabriel went viral online in March after his father, Richard Clark, issued a plea on [*Twitter*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/twitter) for people to follow his son's woodwork [*Instagram*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/instagram) account showing pictures of his handcrafted creations - including wooden chopping boards, bowls and even drumsticks.

The schoolboy had originally been using his passion for woodwork to earn money through commissions in order to buy himself a new mountain bike and said he was "blown away" by the response he had received.

Lovely twitter people -I don't know how many of you are also [*#instagram*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/instagram?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) users but I'm looking for a wee favour. I've a 12yr old who loves woodwork. He spends hours on his lathe making bowls and creating chopping boards which he's sells to save up for a mountain bike. 1/3 [*pic.twitter.com/Ny60rFf1TE*](https://t.co/Ny60rFf1TE) - Richard R Clark (@rclarkie) [*March 25, 2022*](https://twitter.com/rclarkie/status/1507415791116857349?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Within 48 hours, Gabriel's Instagram account, which is supervised by his parents, went from having six followers to over 225,000 followers and included some famous fans such as Radio 1 DJ [*Greg James*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/greg-james) , TV presenter Zoe Ball and YouTube star Joe Sugg.

Since then, the young woodworker has been inundated with over 20,000 commissions for bowls, which he said would take him over 32 years to complete.

"I'm blown away by the number of orders I've received," he said.

"I feel bad that I can't make all the bowls, but I worked out that even if I quit school, which I don't think my mum and dad would be very pleased about, it would still take me 32 years if I made three a day."

Mr Clark, who has directed TV shows including Doctor Who, [*Outlander*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/outlander) and War Of The Worlds, admitted he did initially "panic" about his son's overnight fame.

This isn't about the mountain bike now -Gabriel just wants to do whatever he can to raise as much money as possible for kids in Ukraine

Richard Clark

"When I woke up the next morning after posting the tweet and saw how many followers Gabriel had on his page I did panic a bit, but it's turned into something amazing," he said.

"This isn't about the mountain bike now - Gabriel just wants to do whatever he can to raise as much money as possible for kids in Ukraine."

The winner of Gabriel's Bowl For Ukraine raffle will be announced on Easter Sunday, April 17.

You can enter the prize draw here: [*www.justgiving.com/fundraising/bowlforukraine*](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/bowlforukraine)

**Load-Date:** April 6, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Glasgow student to donate ambulance to help Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YN-RTK1-JBNF-W1GB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 10, 2022 Thursday 11:37 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 274 words

**Byline:** Dan Barker

**Highlight:** It is the latest ambulance student Umran Ali Javaid has donated, with him sending ambulances to war zones including Syria and Yemen in the past.

**Body**

A [*Glasgow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/glasgow) student is set to drive an ambulance to the Polish-Ukrainian border to help refugees fleeing the Russian invasion.

Umran Ali Javaid bought the patient transporter for £2,500 and will set off on Friday on his journey to the Medyka border crossing, where the ambulance will be handed over to charity.

The International Tourism and Events student at Glasgow Caledonian University said: "In war, it's always the innocent civilians that suffer. I feel as if I have to do something to help."

The student, who lives in the west end of Glasgow, has delivered more than 30 second-hand ambulances to war zones in Burma, [*Syria*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/syria) , Iraq, and [*Yemen*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/yemen).

His journey to Ukraine includes a ferry crossing from Newcastle to the [*Netherlands*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/netherlands) , where he will then drive through Germany and then to the border in Poland.

Once in mainland Europe during the 1,500-mile trip, he plans to fill the vehicle with much-needed aid.

"One ambulance can only help a few hundred people but there are tens of thousands in need," the third-year student said.

"It is heart-breaking to see what is happening over there. The ambulance can be used to transport disabled people, older people, or can be filled up with medical supplies."

Once in Ukraine it is hoped the ambulance will be used within the war-torn country to distribute supplies and transport civilians out of immediate danger.

"I have travelled a lot and I've seen the impact war has on civilians first-hand," he said.

"At times of crisis, these areas need supplies and they need patient transport."

The 3.5-tonne vehicle was bought in Newcastle and was previously used as a patient transport service in the north of England.

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Mila Kunis and Ashton Kutcher have helped raise over £13m for Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YF-8SK1-JBNF-W2NX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 9, 2022 Wednesday 8:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,FILM,CULTURE; Version:1

**Length:** 547 words

**Byline:** Peony Hirwani

**Highlight:** The couple started their fundraiser five days ago

**Body**

[*Mila Kunis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mila-kunis) and [*Ashton Kutcher*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ashton-kutcher) have raised over £13m to aid victims of the [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) -[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) conflict.

Last week, the married couple announced that they will match donations of up to $3m (£2.5m) to help supply humanitarian [*aid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/aid) to [***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees).

In a video appeal, Kunis, who was born in Chernivtsi, Ukraine, said there was "no place in this world for this kind of unjust attack on humanity".

"I have always considered myself an American, a proud American. I love everything this country has done for myself and my family," she said. "But today I have never been more proud to be a Ukrainian. The events that have unfolded in Ukraine are devastating. There is no place in this world for this kind of unjust attack on humanity."

Kutcher said: "While we witness the bravery of the people in the country she was born in, we're also witness to the needs of those who have chosen safety."

The Two And A Half Men star added that "logistics" was the principal challenge, getting housing and supplies into the area.

View this post on Instagram [*A post shared by Ashton Kutcher (@aplusk)*](https://www.instagram.com/tv/CavqxJVleWT/?utm_source=ig_embed&utm_campaign=loading)

The couple said they would match donations made to rental company AirBnB and freight transporter Flexport, with the aim of raising $30m (£25.5m).

Just three hours after going live, the page had raised more than $2.5m (£2.08m), thanks to an offline donation from the Ron Conway Family.

Almost five days after their initial announcement, Kunis and Kutcher have managed to raise over $18m (£13m) for people in need.

Vladimir Putin declared war on [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) on 24 February, describing it as a "special military operation" to disarm the eastern European country and remove leaders who he described as neo-Nazis. Nato and its allies see this as a pretext for an invasion to conquer the entire of Ukraine and install a pro-Russian administration.

The war in Ukraine has forced over two million residents to flee the country, and hundreds have either died or have been injured. [*This is the fastest exodus of people Europe has seen*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugee-numbers-crisis-latest-b2029605.html) since the Second World War, officials have said, warning that the war could displace nearly five million people.

Russia has promised to allow five humanitarian corridors to be formed to let people flee major cities under attack by Putin's forces. The firing of weapons in Ukraine will stop from 7am GMT (10am Moscow time) on Wednesday, according to Russian news agency Tass. The corridors will lead out of Kyiv, Chernihiv, Sumy, Kharkiv, and Mariupol.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered.

To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UK will be generous to Ukrainian refugees, says Johnson*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y8-9FM1-JBNF-W42G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 2:59 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 769 words

**Byline:** Gavin Cordon

**Highlight:** Ministers face continued criticism over the slow pace of processing visa applications.

**Body**

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) has insisted the UK will be as generous as possible to Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion as criticism continued over the slow pace of processing visa applications.

Amid signs of frustration in Whitehall, Defence Secretary [*Ben Wallace*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ben-wallace) offered military support to the Home Office to help deal with the backlog of people trying to get into the UK.

Meanwhile, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss announced that a new visa processing centre is being set up in Lille in northern France following reports that refugees arriving in Calais were being told they must go to Paris or Brussels to apply.

The [*Prime Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prime-minister) briefed the weekly meeting of the Cabinet on the latest situation in Ukraine ahead of a historic address to the House of Commons by President Volodymyr Zelensky.

The Ukrainian leader is expected to use his speech - by video-link from Kyiv - to appeal again for a Nato no-fly zone over his country, something Britain and other Western allies have ruled out amid fears it would lead to a wider war with Russia.

A No 10 spokesman said Mr Johnson told Cabinet that the UK is continuing to supply "lethal defensive aid and equipment" to bolster the Ukrainian forces' "heroic" resistance in the face of the Russian onslaught.

The Prime Minister said the UK would be "as generous as we could" in its support for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, while Home Secretary Priti Patel set out the extra assistance the Government is providing.

The Home Office disclosed on Monday night that just 300 visas had been issued out of a total of 17,700 family scheme applications that have been started, 8,900 of which have been submitted.

In the Commons, Home Office minister [*Kevin Foster*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kevin-foster) said the figure for visas issued has since risen to more than 500, while the new processing centre at Lille is expected to be set up within the next 24 hours.

He told MPs officials are also looking at how transport can be provided between Calais and Lille, but the slow rate of progress continues to attract criticism from all sides.

Shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper said that, while other countries are supporting hundreds of thousands of people, 600 people seeking to reach the UK have been turned back at Calais.

"Most want to stay close to home but some want to come here to join family or friends, and we should be helping them; instead most people are still being held up by our Home Office bureaucracy or being turned away," she said.

Senior Tory backbencher Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, who secured an emergency Commons statement, said that, while security checks are important, it should be possible to speed up the process.

"We need efficiency but also humanity when it when processing applications of refugees from Ukraine, and we should warmly welcome those refugees to this country," he said.

Mr Foster said officials were having to deal with people presenting with false documents and "making claims that are not true".

However Conservative former immigration minister Caroline Nokes said there was still no sign of a promised humanitarian sponsorship visa route to operate alongside the family route.

"Snails also move at pace," she told Mr Foster.

"When (he) says he is moving at pace it needs to be a great deal faster."

Earlier Mr Wallace acknowledged that the Government needed to move quicker and said he was offering Ministry of Defence (MoD) support to the Home Office to speed up the work.

"We can do more, we will do more," he told BBC Breakfast.

"It's not the case that we are only allowing 300 people in; it is the case that the system has not been quick enough, which is what we're going to address."

While Mr Wallace again reiterated his opposition to a no-fly zone, he said that however the conflict in Ukraine played out, it was clear President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) was a "spent force".

He said the Russian leader would not break the people of Ukraine and that he now potentially faced decades of occupation which would be impossible to sustain.

"Whatever we think about President Putin, he is done. He is a spent force in the world. No-one will be taking his phone calls in the long term," he told BBC Radio 4's Today programme.

"He has exhausted his army, he is responsible for thousands of Russian soldiers being killed, responsible for innocent people being killed, civilians being killed in Ukraine.

"He is reducing his economy to zero, because the international community has decided that is absolutely unacceptable, what he's done.

"So he is a spent force in the world and I don't know whether he thinks that's a clever thing to be, but that diminishes his own country in the world and he has to take responsibility for that."

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees: UK set to waive red tape for pets*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650B-9NM1-JBNF-W011-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 13, 2022 Sunday 3:18 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:4

**Length:** 688 words

**Byline:** Jane Dalton

**Highlight:** Government set to drop paperwork and make vaccines and quarantine free under emergency rules, say sources

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) who carried their [*pets*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/pets) as they fled their homes will be allowed to bring the animals into the UK without paperwork or facing vaccine and quarantine bills, The Independent has learnt.

The government is preparing to announce emergency measures to make it easier for the victims of war to keep their cats and dogs with them rather than abandoning them in countries en route to the UK, such as Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Germany.

With more than 2.5 million Ukrainians having been forced to leave the country, sources say ministers will waive the strict rule that requires owners to have a pet passport or health certificate to bring in their pets.

It's thought the government is also set to announce it will cover the cost of vaccines including for rabies.

In addition, quarantine costs will be free - and officials are considering setting up a new system of home quarantine if demand exceeds places in UK quarantine facilities.

Ukrainian dogs and cats that have already been vaccinated should not need to be quarantined.

British animal-protection activists [*have been lobbying the government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/uk-vets-ukraine-refugees-pets-b2033945.html) to relax entry restrictions on pets belonging to those fleeing war.

The government move is understood to be considered a trade-off for the government's [*dropping the flagship Animals Abroad Bill*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/fur-imports-foe-gras-ban-animal-welfare-b2018752.html) , which would have banned imports of real fur, body parts from trophy-hunting, foie gras and shark fins, as well as adverts for elephant rides.

Under the UK's rules, owners may to enter or return to Britain with a pet cat, dog or ferret only if the animal has been microchipped, has a pet passport or health certificate and has been vaccinated against rabies.

Normally, animals from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) would also need a blood test for rabies at least three months before travelling.

But it's understood these requirements will all be waived.

The government is preparing to unveil a system of paying British people £350 a month for hosting refugees from Ukraine.

And officials are working with vets and quarantine facilities to look at ways to support incoming pet owners.

Last week lobbyists wrote to animal-welfare minister Zac Goldsmith and environment secretary George Eustice, calling for an emergency pet passport scheme and offering help in setting up cat and dog health check systems.

They warned that forcing people already devastated by war to potentially leave their beloved animals to die would deepen their trauma.

Dominic Dyer in his letter: "If UK policy remains that no companion animals can enter the UK with refugees, we could see tens of thousands of [*dogs*](https://indy-web-prod.brightsites.co.uk/topic/dogs) and [*cats*](https://indy-web-prod.brightsites.co.uk/topic/cats) having to be euthanised in Poland, Hungary and Romania in the weeks ahead.

"Each of these animal deaths would bring further misery to the women and children who have escaped war and would make Britain's immigration policy look extremely cruel in comparison to other EU member states."

The International Fund for Animal Welfare has estimated up to half of Ukrainian families fleeing are pet owners.

If the rules on microchipping and paperwork are not followed, any pet would normally be put in quarantine for up to four months, under the UK's strict measures to keep the country rabies-free.

A government spokesperson said: spokesperson said: "We recognise the difficult and distressing situation that Ukrainian nationals currently face, and the UK government is working at pace to support them.

"We have strong biosecurity measures in place to protect the public and other animals from diseases which can be brought to the UK by animals from overseas.

"The government is looking at options to provide support to Ukrainian nationals who are entering the UK with their pets."

Mimi Bekhechi, vice-president of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta), welcomed the decision, saying its workers in Poland and Ukraine had "seen first-hand the dangerous lengths that people are going to to bring their animals with them when fleeing".

She said: "It's only right that the UK be a place of safe harbour for them.

"We hope the quarantine periods for animals can be shortened and that quarantined animals will be allowed regular visits from their human family members."

**Load-Date:** March 13, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Zelensky backs UK response to Ukraine refugee crisis, claims minister as only 760 visas granted*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YF-FDC1-JBNF-W4M9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 9, 2022 Wednesday 9:30 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:3

**Length:** 514 words

**Byline:** Adam Forrest

**Highlight:** 'Zelensky has asked us to proceed in the way we are doing', says Grant Shapps

**Body**

Ukrainian president [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.ukfile:///topic/volodymyr-zelensky) supports the UK government's approach to the refugee crisis in the war-torn country, cabinet minister [*Grant Shapps*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/grant-shapps) has said.

The transport secretary said he was "proud" of the government's approach, as he revealed only 760 visas had been granted for Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion.

Asked why the UK was still insisting on visa checks which had been dropped by EU countries, Mr Shapps told Sky News: "President Zelensky has asked us to proceed in the way we are doing."

The minister said: "Geographically, of course, we're space further to the west. President Zelensky and the Ukrainian government have told me that they do not want people to move far away from the country, if at all possible, because they want people to come back."

Mr Shapps added: "We're doing that in close coordination with president Zelensky and the Ukrainian government who want to keep people as close to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) as possible."

The minister claimed the UK's approach was "respecting Ukraine's wishes, the government's wishes, not to pull people a long way away from Ukraine".

Mr Shapps said the UK's insistence on visa controls for Ukrainians was the correct approach for security reasons. "It's not beyond Putin to send people here to cause trouble - we do need to know who is coming into the country," he told LBC.

He also said the decision not to have a visa application centre in Calais was to avoid Ukrainians becoming targets for criminal people-smuggling gangs operating around the Channel port.

"We know very much there's a criminal people trafficking operation that runs out of Calais," the minister said. "Which is certainly something we don't want people escaping war to then get caught up in."

Mr Shapps revealed that 760 visas had been granted to Ukrainians from 22,000 applications to the special family route, with 6,000 slots available at processing centres for people who are seeking visas.

The minister said a new visa centre would be set up in Lille soon, 70 miles from Calais, and the number of visas granted would "expand rapidly".

Mr Shapps argued that the Lille centre would allow more Ukrainians to have their paperwork in order before arriving at Calais to cross.

"We do not want to see this mixed up with the wider issue of people traffickers and criminal gangs in Calais, so we don't want to attract people to Calais without having the paperwork resolved in the first place."

Asked if he was embarrassed about the visa situation, Mr Shapps told the BBC: "I'm sure there's always lessons to be learned in these things. But you are dealing with a war situation - funnily enough Putin didn't put much consideration into what would happen to refugees out of this war."

Conservative MP Caroline Nokes was among the many backbenchers attacking the Home Office response to the crisis and ministerial claims to be moving "at pace", saying: "Snails also move at pace".

Home Office minister [*Kevin Foster*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kevin-foster) refused to say if the sponsorship scheme - allowing Britons to sponsor Ukrainians without family in the UK - would take "weeks or months" to get underway.

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'No clear way' for Ukrainian refugees to link up with UK hosts under sponsorship scheme as confusion continues*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651F-1FT1-JBNF-W1KD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 18, 2022 Friday 8:26 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 947 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Warnings 'only a trickle' of Ukrainians will benefit from scheme amid confusion over 'matching' process

**Body**

Fears have been raised that there is no clear route for [***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) to apply to come to Britain under its new sponsorship scheme.

On the day that the scheme launched, charities have said that the number of [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugee) who will be granted [*sanctuary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sanctuary) in the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme will be only a "trickle", despite the fact that more than 150,000 people in Britain have registered to host them, because of the confusion around how they can be "matched" with hosts.

It is unclear what action the government is taking to communicate information about the scheme to refugees stranded in Europe. [*The Independent revealed*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-russia-refugees-ed-davey-b2036581.html) earlier this week that Ukrainians in Poland hoping to seek refuge in the UK had "no idea" how to go about it.

The government says that when it launches "phase two" of the scheme - it is not yet known when this will be - it will work more closely with charities to identify Ukrainians in need of protection in the UK.

Ministers launched the Ukraine sponsorship scheme on Friday, with the webpage stating that Ukrainian nationals and their family members may apply to come to the UK if they have a "named sponsor".

The scheme, announced on Monday by the minister for levelling up, [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) , will allow Ukrainians with no family links to come to the UK and be hosted by members of the public, who will be paid £350 per month for sharing their homes.

The government is yet to release data on the number of refugees who have applied to the scheme, but lawyers and charities warn that the figure is likely to be moderately low due to the lack of information on how refugees can connect with suitable sponsors.

The Independent is raising money for the people of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) - if you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

Jenni Regan, chief executive at iMix, which represents refugee and asylum charities in the UK, said that while the sector "welcomed" the speed at which the scheme had been implemented, there were "concerns about just how many people from Ukraine this is actually going to help at this stage".

"Currently, hosts need to have the name and details of the person they wish to sponsor before they can even apply, and there is no clear way of linking up with people seeking sanctuary from Ukraine," she said.

"The government have made it clear that they are not in a position to support the matching process, instead relying on charities [as well as] faith and community groups to provide outreach and matching opportunities."

Announcing the scheme, Mr Gove said he hoped individuals and community groups would be able to "match" with refugees using social media, adding that charities would help with the process.

But Ms Regan raised concerns about this, saying that it would only benefit those who are "digitally savvy", and adding: "This method is also concerning in terms of safeguarding on both sides."

Robina Qureshi, executive officer at Positive Action in Housing, a charity that has been matching refugees and asylum seekers with hosts in the UK for decades, said they had so far been contacted by 16,000 people offering to host Ukrainians, and just 160 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

"What the government has is a spreadsheet with names on it of people expressing an interest. That register is going to go nowhere. Only a trickle of people will ever see a Ukrainian refugee," she said.

"Heartbreakingly, the people whose lives depend on that visa and that hosting programme are struggling and waiting. For all the goodwill that there is in the UK, the people whose lives depend on this process are not in the country."

Immigration lawyer Simon Cox, who is supporting a number of Ukrainians with applications to come to the UK, said it was "clear" that the programme "hadn't been thought through".

"There's certainly a role for the voluntary sector in the matching process, but it does need to be supervised by the government to ensure that those matches take place and are safe," he said.

"[The scheme] may have seemed like a great idea in turning down the political heat, but it's actually a huge operation. The government wants to go out and say they're doing something so the public move on and think about something else."

The government has said it will be working closely with charities, faith groups, universities and others to ensure people who want to help are matched to people from Ukraine.

It advises on its website that if someone wishing to host does not currently know a Ukrainian refugee, they "may wish to get in touch with charities, faith groups or local community organisations who are starting to make connections between individuals".

Scotland's first minister Nicola Sturgeon announced on Friday that the country had opened its "super-sponsor" scheme, meaning ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** can apply via the UK sponsorship scheme by selecting "Scottish government" on the application.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UK slammed for 'truly dreadful' treatment of Ukrainian refugees amid confusion over Home Office visa process*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y9-G961-DY4H-K1K9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 9:14 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 1138 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Refugees Welcome: Frustration mounts around Britain's response to refugee influx in Europe

**Body**

Frustration and confusion around the UK's response to the [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) refugee crisis continued on Tuesday as [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) was [*accused*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/priti-patel-ukraine-refugees-calais-b2030979.html) of misleading parliament over arrangements for those trying to reach the UK via [*Calais*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/calais).

[*No 10 announced*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/russia-ukraine-crisis-refugees-visa-calais-b2031004.html) that hundreds of [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) who have travelled to the French town in the hope of reaching loved ones in Britain would have to make a 70-mile journey to Lille to apply for [*visas*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/visas) , despite previous suggestions that there would be a visa centre closer to the port.

The Home Office has said that ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** can take free tickets offered by Eurostar to make the journey from Calais to Lille - but there are no journeys available on the Eurostar website between these two locations.

Concern meanwhile mounted around the bureaucratic process refugees are confronted with when trying to apply under the UK's family migration route, as it emerged some are having to wait weeks to get a visa appointment, while others turned up to visa centres to discover that they were closed.

A lack of available appointment slots at visa centres in EU countries has meant some refugees are not currently able to apply for the new refugee scheme, under which Ms Patel has said tens of thousands of close relatives of British nationals and people settled in the UK will be eligible to come to Britain after it opened on Friday.

MPs said there were no appointments in Paris until 15 March and none in Poland until the "end of the month". The Independent has been in touch with Ukrainians who have said they have been unable to book an appointment. The Home Office has insisted that there are free appointments.

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Poland, including elderly people and children, were [*forced to queue for several hours*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugees-poland-uk-visa-home-office-b2031118.html) in freezing conditions outside a visa centre in Rzeszow after it stopped accepting walk-in appointments - a situation described by Labour's Clive Efford described as "complete chaos".

Andrei Toloshko, 37, who fled from Kyiv with his wife, Eugenia and five-year-old son Ilya, said he had not yet managed to submit an application to join his brother in the UK due to no appointments being available.

The Ukraine resident said he attended the UK visa centre in Chisinau, Moldova - the only centre in the country - on Monday and were turned away because there were too many people. They returned on Tuesday to find that the centre was shut for a public holiday.

"I'm shocked. The Home Office said they would try to make it faster, but it's no different to normal. They are obviously completely unprepared for this situation," he told The Independent. He has now managed to book an appointment for Saturday.

The Independent understands that the Home Office has placed 35 additional Home Office staff in visa centres across Europe, which is expected to go up to 50 in the coming days. There are 57 UK visa centres across the continent.

On Monday evening the Home Office revealed that 300 [*visas*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/visas) had been granted to Ukrainians after the department received thousands of applications.

It emerged on Tuesday that the Home Office was warned in November by the immigration watchdog that the "geographical spread" of its visa centres was causing "particular challenges" for vulnerable applicants and leading to difficult and dangerous journeys -yet no action was taken despite warnings of the imminent invasion in Ukraine.

The Independent is raising money for the people of Ukraine - if you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

So far our appeal has raised £123,00 for the people of Ukraine, but they need more, please give what you can to help support them.

Shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper told the House of Commons that most people trying to apply to come to Britain were being "held up by Home Office bureaucracy or being turned away in their time of need".

"It is truly dreadful the way that desperate people are being treated. Families are being expected to travel hundreds of miles to visa centres that only open part time, or to wait a week for the next appointment," she said.

During the same sitting, Ms Patel was accused by a senior Conservative MP of misleading parliament over arrangements for ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) trying to reach the UK via [*Calais*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/calais) , after she twice claimed that a centre had been set up on the way to the French port - only for it to later emerge that no such centre had been set up.

The Independent has set up a petition calling on the UK government to be at the forefront of the international community offering aid and support to those in Ukraine. To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees/u/30286981) .

We want to get 200,000 signatures as soon as we can to help put as much pressure on the government as possible, please add your support today.

Sir Roger Gale told the Commons that "in any normal administration", her behaviour would have been a resignation matter.

Instead of admitting that she had given inaccurate information, the home secretary wrongly told Ms Cooper that she had already "made quite clear" that the centre had not yet been set up and accused the Labour frontbencher of mishearing her earlier comments.

It came as Downing Street announced that the former Tory minister Richard Harrington had been appointed as the new minister for refugees. Mr Harrington, who stood down as an MP at the 2019 general election, will be made a life peer so he can sit in the Lords.

Meanwhile, [*The Independent revealed*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-embassy-staff-diplomats-uk-b2031024.html) that Ukrainians who worked at the British [*embassy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/embassy) in [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) have been told they will not get refuge in the UK as they seek to flee the war unless they can fulfil strict entry qualifications.

Unlike other European countries, the UK is demanding that [*Ukrainians seeking sanctuary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugee-visa-priti-patel-home-office-uk-b2030499.html) apply for visas, which are granted only to those with family links in Britain. A second scheme, not yet in operation, will allow entry to individuals sponsored by councils, charities or businesses.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees at Polish border start returning home*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6520-GFK1-F072-43DG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 21, 2022 Monday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 6

**Length:** 390 words

**Byline:** ZAINA ALIBHAI

**Body**

The war in Ukraine has seen millions of people forced to flee their homes for safety in neighbouring countries.

However, at the Polish border with Ukraine reports are emerging of many, including women and children, returning to Ukraine despite the risks.

One couple had been on holiday when the invasion happened and were returning to be with family who had stayed put, Sky News reports.

Another woman, Valentina Puzanova, said she travelled to Poland to take her elderly mother and young son to safety, and was heading back to be with her husband.

And the Bilechenko family, including a mother, father and their four children, said they are heading back after two weeks in Poland as the draw to be home "outweighs the risk".

The United Nations estimates that since Russian troops first entered Ukraine on 24 February, 3,270,662 have left the country, the majority of whom have gone to Poland. Ninety per cent of them are women and children.

The Kyiv Independent estimates more than 320,000 Ukrainians have returned since the beginning of the war, most of whom were men who wanted to defend their country.

The UN has warned that humanitarian needs are becoming ever-more urgent, with 200,000 people now without access to water across Donetsk and 100,000 people with no electricity in Luhansk, due to heavy shelling.

Residents in Mariupol and Sumy are facing a critical shortage of food, water and medicine, while in Odesa authorities have appealed for support for the 450,000 people in the city.

Ukraine's deputy prime minister Iryna Vereshchuk said seven humanitarian corridors would open on Sunday to enable civilians to leave frontline areas.

The UN estimates at least 847 civilians have been killed and 1,399 wounded as of Friday, with the Ukrainian prosecutor general's office claiming 112 children to have been killed.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, click here. To sign the petition click here. If you would like to donate then please click here for our GoFundMe page

**Load-Date:** March 21, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Most Ukrainian refugees in UK say they don’t have money to support themselves for next three months*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65XS-23K1-DY4H-K273-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 15, 2022 Friday 12:17 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 421 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** ONS data suggests majority of Ukrainians struggling financially, while most working-age refugees are currently working or were very likely or likely to look for work in the UK in the next month

**Body**

Most [***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) in the UK say they don’t have enough money to support themselves and their families for the next three months, a new survey shows.

Data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) also indicate that people who have come to Britain after fleeing Putin’s invasion have struggled to access [*healthcare*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/healthcare).

The survey of 3,412 individuals on both the Ukraine family scheme and the Homes for Ukraine scheme found that 37 per cent reported they have enough money to support themselves and their dependents for the next three months – indicating that nearly two-thirds do not.

Around four in five (83 per cent) working-age respondents reported they were currently working, or that they were very likely or likely to look for work in the UK in the next month.

The findings also show that a third of respondents were receiving regular healthcare treatment before leaving Ukraine, but only 22 per cent of them said this treatment had continued since arriving in the UK.

Around one in five respondents (21 per cent) reported receiving regular prescriptions for medication or drugs while in Ukraine, but only 37 per cent said they have been able to access regular prescriptions and drugs since arriving in the UK.

It comes after it [*emerged last month*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-children-refugees-homeless-councils-uk-b2102638.html) that 660 households who have come to Britain via these routes have been forced to register as homeless.

The data, published by the Department for Levelling up, Communities and Housing, revealed that of the homeless households, 480 were families with at least one child, while 180 were single households.

Government figures show 109,700 refugees have so far come to the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, while 45,900 have arrived under the family scheme.

The ONS survey also revealed that around four in ten respondents (38 per cent) said they intend to stay in the UK for three years or more, while 29 per cent said they intended to stay for up to three years and 30 per cent did not know.

It shows that the overwhelming majority who have arrived are women with children, and nearly half can speak or read English.

A government spokesperson said: “From day one, Ukrainians have had the right to work and to access benefits and public services, including education and healthcare, on the same-footing as UK nationals. This will continue to be the case for those who wish to remain in the UK.â€‹”

More than 5.8 million refugees from Ukraine have fled to European countries since the war started at the end of February, according to data from the UN refugee agency (UNHCR).

**Load-Date:** July 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Most Ukrainian refugees in UK say they don’t have money to support themselves for next three months*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65XT-6GP1-DY4H-K025-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 15, 2022 Friday 6:55 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK NEWS,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:1

**Length:** 421 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** ONS data suggests majority of Ukrainians struggling financially, while most working-age refugees are currently working or were very likely or likely to look for work in the UK in the next month

**Body**

Most [***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) in the UK say they don’t have enough money to support themselves and their families for the next three months, a new survey shows.

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**Load-Date:** July 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Call for emergency airlift for Ukrainian refugees hoping to come to the UK*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6516-1WY1-JBNF-W444-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 17, 2022 Thursday 2:15 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 572 words

**Byline:** Jemma Crew

**Highlight:** The UK Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme is due to formally open on Friday.

**Body**

The [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) has been urged to set up an emergency airlift for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** on the Polish border, ahead of the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine scheme opening on Friday.

Liberal Democrat leader Sir [*Ed Davey*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ed-davey) said the UK Government should provide free flights to the UK, and coaches to take people from border crossing points to the airport.

Writing to Home Secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) and Foreign Secretary [*Liz Truss*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liz-truss) , he also called for welcome centres for the refugees arriving in Britain.

Tens of thousands of Britons have registered their interest in taking in Ukrainians, and will be able to apply under the sponsorship scheme from Friday.

And the public has been praised for its "hugely generous response" after the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal reached £200 million - two weeks after launching.

This equates to around £3 for every person in the UK, the DEC said.

Sir Ed, who visited the border earlier this week, and said he was "appalled by the lack of any organised UK Government sponsored or supported welcome, and the absence of UK Government personnel on the ground at the border".

He continued: "I met people who are desperate to come to the UK - often to join family members.

"However, there was no one from the Government and no one supported or sponsored by the UK Government to help them to get here or even to explain how they might get to the UK.

"In just the past few days, more than 100,000 people across the UK have offered to host refugees fleeing Ukraine - demonstrating clearly the immense compassion of the British people. The Government must urgently step up its response to match that spirit of generosity."

We are concerned the scheme could be too slow and complex to help some of the most vulnerable

Andy Hewett, of the Refugee Council

The Refugee Council said it has several concerns about the scheme, specifically around red tape, safeguarding and resourcing.

Andy Hewett, head of advocacy, said: "We are concerned the scheme could be too slow and complex to help some of the most vulnerable, such as children who are alone and may find it difficult to apply for a visa.

"There's also the issue of this scheme favouring those who already know someone in the UK, who may not be those most at risk.

"Not only this, the extremely traumatised women and children who arrive from Ukraine will need significant specialist, professional support to come to terms with all they have endured.

"Our worry is that the new scheme may not include the robust checks, training or professional support that will be needed to provide this."

Around 3 million people have now fled Ukraine, with more expected over coming weeks and months. DEC member charities and their local partners are providing food, water, beds, medical assistance, and psychological support. Please donate today: [*https://t.co/JRCP8NYvdB*](https://t.co/JRCP8NYvdB) [*pic.twitter.com/U9yc3w0K7a*](https://t.co/U9yc3w0K7a) - DEC (@decappeal) [*March 17, 2022*](https://twitter.com/decappeal/status/1504427582804176896?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Mr Hewett said the Government "urgently" needs to publish guidance to provide "much-needed clarity" for sponsors, local Government and civil society.

He added: "The generosity of the public has been incredibly heart-warming and we urge the Government to meet that in kind with a scheme that really works for the many people fleeing the war and bloodshed in Ukraine."

Under the separate Ukraine family scheme, 6,100 visas have been issued as of 4pm on Wednesday, the Home Office said.

Some 25,000 applications have been submitted.

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Johnson admits Ukrainian refugees could be sent to Rwanda but ‘very unlikely’*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65S4-BRY1-DY4H-K4MP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 23, 2022 Thursday 10:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 658 words

**Byline:** Sam Blewett

**Highlight:** The Prime Minister said the only circumstances in which people will be sent to East Africa would be if they come to the UK illegally.

**Body**

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) has admitted that ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** could be forcibly removed to [*Rwanda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rwanda) if they arrive in the UK through unauthorised means.

But the [*Prime Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prime-minister) insisted it is “very unlikely” that asylum seekers fleeing the Russian invasion will be caught up in his widely criticised policy.

Labour said it was “disgraceful” that Mr Johnson believes it is fine to send those fleeing Putin’s bombs to Rwanda.

Mr Johnson is attending a meeting of Commonwealth leaders in the Rwandan capital [*Kigali*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kigali) , where he will hold talks with the [*Prince of Wales*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-of-wales) on Friday after Charles reportedly criticised the policy as “appalling”.

Rwanda’s human rights record is high among the concerns about the £120 million economic deal, but no one-way flights for migrants are yet to take off.

The only circumstances in which people will be sent to Rwanda would be if they come to the UK illegally, and thereby undermine the safe and legal routes that we have

Prime Minister Boris Johnson

The first was due to take off last week but was grounded by legal challenges.

Questioned by journalists travelling with him to Rwanda, Mr Johnson said: “The only circumstances in which people will be sent to Rwanda would be if they come to the UK illegally, and thereby undermine the safe and legal routes that we have.

“I think we are giving 130,000 visas to Ukrainians, they have at least two very good routes for coming to this country.

“But if you come here illegally, you’re undermining all those who come here legally. And it’s crazy.

“So, in principle, I’m afraid the answer is, I suppose, yes, in theory that could happen, but I think it’s very unlikely.”

Shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper said: “The British people have opened their homes to those fleeing this terrible war and made clear we should do our bit to help Ukraine.

“So it is disgraceful that the Prime Minister thinks it is OK to send Ukrainians fleeing war who arrive here without the right papers thousands of miles to Rwanda instead.

“We have warned repeatedly that this policy is unworkable, unethical, extortionately expensive and risks making people trafficking worse. The Prime Minister should abandon this now.”

Despite the scheme being stalled, it has emerged that Britain has already made payments to Kigali, which has begun spending the money to be ready to receive asylum seekers.

The Rwandan government said it had begun spending the cash to be ready in time for last week’s flight, which was cancelled at the last minute.

Downing Street conceded some payments had been made to Kigali but would not set out how much or when under the “confidential” deal signed two months ago.

The payments came despite no one-way flights for migrants who arrive in the UK through unauthorised journeys taking off.

Questioned about whether payments had begun, Rwanda government spokeswoman Yolande Makolo said: “Because that was intended to prepare for all the accommodations and all the other institutions to you know, beef up the processes – so that’s been done.”

Pressed whether any of it had already been spent, she said: “Part of it because we needed to get ready and we were ready to receive the first migrants on the 14th.”

The first flight was halted after an interim injunction from the European Court of Human Rights, pending a decision on the legality of the scheme in the UK courts.

Mr Johnson’s spokesman said: “The agreement with Rwanda with regards to the funding is confidential. It’s fair to say we have made some payments as part of that migration partnership, that’s correct.

“Obviously there’s a number of pieces of work they need to do to get things ready, to get things set up.”

Ministers had anticipated about 130 people to be on board but legal challenges reduced this to only around seven or fewer on the day of take-off.

Then the court in Strasbourg granted an interim injunction barring the removal of an Iraqi asylum seeker until a decision on the legality of the Government’s policy is made in UK courts.

**Load-Date:** June 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Prague closes the door to Ukrainian refugees because of overcrowding fears*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65PR-GNT1-F072-44PD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

June 17, 2022 Friday

First Edition

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**Section:** WORLD; Pg. 31

**Length:** 792 words

**Byline:** WILLIAM NATTRASS IN PRAGUE

**Body**

A short walk through the streets of Prague is all it takes to realise the extent of the Czech capital's help for refugees fleeing war in Ukraine.

In just under four months, the social fabric of this metropolitan city has changed. Ukrainian is now probably the most commonly heard language after Czech, and signs of Ukraine's struggle are ever-present in yellow-and-blue flags lining city streets and flying from public buildings.

Yet now, Prague is closing to refugees. City authorities have long complained about the concentration of refugees in the capital compared with other parts of the country, and at midnight on Wednesday, the city's processing centre for new arrivals shut its doors.

Prague mayor Zdenek Hrib said he could not allow the arrival of more Ukrainians because he has a "duty not to allow the inhabitants of Prague to run out of places in schools or with doctors, and to have nowhere to live".

Hrib claims the capital is hosting four times more refugees per capitathan other Czech regions, with its refugee centre handling close to 100,000 refugees since the start of the war. The country has accepted more than 340,000.

Prague, a city of 1.3 million, has been warning about overcrowding for weeks as uncertainty grows about the long-term impacts of the crisis. Education is the biggest worry; some feared a sign of things to come when a school near Prague recently began prioritising places for Ukrainian children over Czechs.

Aneta Lednova, a spokesperson for the Czech Education Ministry, told The Independent that precise numbers of Ukrainian school-age children were impossible to gauge because "the number is constantly changing depending on families' arrival or departure from the Czech Republic".

"In the new school year (starting in September), school attendance will be compulsory for all Ukrainian children, and Ukrainian children attending school will have the same rights as Czech children," she confirmed.

But no one knows how many Ukrainian children will enrol in Czech schools - or how the education system would cope with the sudden addition of tens or even hundreds of thousands of new pupils when the new academic year begins.

The uncertainty compounds a tight squeeze on accommodation that led to the construction of a tent camp in Prague mostly used to house Roma refugees whom the city authorities claim are in many cases not eligible to receive state aid.

The situation isn't helped by the impossibility of predicting how many refugees will stay in the long term. In late May, interior minister Vít Rakusan tried to calm nerves by claiming 1,000 refugees a day were leaving the Czech Republic to return home to Ukraine.

But speaking to The Independent, Ondrej Kratoska from the Interior Ministry confirmed that the authorities have very little idea about the real number of refugees staying or going.

"A lot of them may be returning home to check on their belongings, to see whether their houses have been destroyed," he said. "Once they have a visa here, they can move around as they please."

The ministry's assessment seems to accurately reflect the reality of the situation in Prague.

A Russian IT professional who opened his home to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** told The Independent that the family who stayed with him have returned to Kyiv as "it seems to be relatively calm there", but that "they may return" in future.

According to Kratoska, the fluidity of the situation is compounded by the lack of checks at the Czech border resulting from EU free movement. While this allows Ukrainians to act quickly as they anxiously follow the development of the war back home, it also means Prague can't be sure that it won't face a meltdown in public services and infrastructure in the coming months.

The capital's resultant rejection of more refugees moves the Czech Republic into a new phase in dealing with the crisis, with more Ukrainians set to arrive in other towns and villages.

This poses new dangers. Prague is far and away the most welcoming part of the Czech Republic for Ukrainians, and the most supportive of the Ukrainian war effort. The city itself was invaded by Soviet, mostly Russian, troops in 1968 at the time of the Prague Spring, when the Czechs sought a degree of freedom from the dead hand of the USSR during the Cold War.

But, especially in more rural areas, the possible arrival of a wave of refugees tends to be met with grimaces of trepidation rather than sympathy- and many Czechsare already of the opinion that help should not be provided indefinitely to those displaced by the war.

As the west struggles to keep its support for Ukraine at full throttle as a protracted war looms, a swing in public opinion against refugees driven by more conservative sections of the Czech population wouldn't help the cause.

**Load-Date:** June 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Family visa scheme for Ukrainian refugees extended to include cousins and in-laws*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y8-51B1-JBNF-W05P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 1:55 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:6

**Length:** 592 words

**Byline:** Andrew Woodcock

**Highlight:** 'Snails also move at a pace': Home Office blasted for bureaucratic system that has admitted just 500 Ukrainians

**Body**

The UK is extending its family visa scheme for ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) to include aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins and in-laws.

The announcement was made in the House of Commons by Home Office minister Kevin Foster, who claimed that the government was making "significant progress" in responding to the refugee crisis and had now processed more than 500 Ukrainian applicants for sanctuary in the UK.

But the minister -who suggested at the outset of the invasion that Ukrainians fleeing war could apply for visas to pick fruit in the UK -was blasted by shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper.

She condemned the Home Office for a bureaucratic and "chaotic" response which had seen hundreds of desperate people turned away at Calais as they tried to reach the UK.

Ms Cooper welcomed the extension of the family visa scheme, which was initially limited to spouses, partners, children under 18 and parents of under-18s but was later expanded to include grandparents and children over 18.

But she told the Commons that the Home Office should now "issue emergency visas for Ukrainians -all family but not just family -so they can come here and the UK can do our historic bit to help refugees fleeing war in Europe, as we've done before".

Mr Foster rejected calls for visas to be waived, telling MPs that people had already been detected at Calais with false documents, trying to get through immigration checks by pretending to be Ukrainian.

He suggested that this might be a route for Russia to infiltrate dangerous people into the UK.

To groans of disbelief from opposition MPs, Mr Foster said: "I appreciate that some may think that's not an issue, but we only need to look at some of the statements coming out the Kremlin to see which countries are very much in the crosshairs of Mr Putin's Russian regime."

In reference to the poison attack on former spy Sergei Skripal in Salisbury in 2018, he urged MPs to "look back a short period of time to see the impact on this country of attacks by those pretending they came here to look at a cathedral spire".

But Scottish National Party home affairs spokesperson Stuart McDonald retorted: "Don't quote Salisbury at us. That has absolutely nothing to do with this."

And Tory former minister Caroline Nokes derided Mr Foster's claim that the Home Office was moving "at pace" to help Ukrainians, telling him: "Snails also move at a pace."

Conservative MP Steve Brine said: "Surely we are past the time for the UK saying we're going to have a generous scheme. It's time to deliver a generous scheme.

"The family scheme is too slow. The humanitarian response visa is still in design... At the very least can we have a very simple online gateway up and running tomorrow, where constituents who want to help can at least register their interest? There's so much compassion and want to help, and people are not able to do so."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: Why are we treating Syrians so differently to Ukrainian refugees?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65P4-M711-DY4H-K212-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 14, 2022 Tuesday 10:03 AM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:1

**Length:** 766 words

**Byline:** Sunny Hundal

**Highlight:** Their country is in the exact same situation: being bombed by Vladimir Putin

**Body**

Last month, 25-year-old Andriy Kovalenko just about managed to escape the city of Mariupol as Russians were advancing, and made his way to Poland. But the refugee camps were overflowing, so he made his way further west, towards Germany and eventually France. There, he made some friends and decided that, because he knew some broken English, he would make his way into Britain. He had heard good things about the country in the media and was hopeful he would be welcomed.

But as he was making his way across the English Channel, in a boat full of other refugees, they were stopped. Now the government wants to deport him to Rwanda for processing. As one of the [*first deportation flights to Rwanda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/rwanda-refugees-flight-latest-priti-patel-b2100383.html) gets under way, he may be on it.

Surely, most right thinking people would be outraged by the prospect of us deporting a desperate and deserving asylum seeker such as Andriy to Rwanda? After all, his land is being bombarded and destroyed, and he just travelled across a continent for safety, only to find out he was being shipped off to a country [*run by a cruel dictator*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/priti-patel-rwanda-scheme-asylum-plan-b2099581.html).

Now, imagine if we did the same to a Syrian refugee. [*Their country is in the exact same situation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/syria-ukraine-putin-assad-idlib-russia-b2044057.html) : being bombed by Vladimir Putin to help the dictator Bashar al-Assad maintain control. Entire towns have been blown into smithereens exactly like Mariupol. Millions of Syrians simply have nowhere to live. The neighbouring countries are already overflowing with refugees, so some have gone further away to find shelter.

And yet, while [*Boris Johnson was adamant that*](https://www.lbc.co.uk/news/ukrainian-refugees-boris-johnson-rwanda/) no Ukrainian refugee would end up going to Rwanda, his home secretary is currently trying to deport Syrians to Rwanda. I made up the story of Andriy Kovalenko – there’s no such case as far as I know – to illustrate a point: while Syrians and Ukrainians are largely in the same situation, there is a huge difference in how our government is treating them. For one, British people are being actively encouraged to take ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** into their homes to house them in Britain –[*we’re even being paid to do so*](https://www.gov.uk/register-interest-homes-ukraine).

Some might argue that we have more obligation towards fellow Europeans than to those escaping conflict in the Middle East or further away like South Asia. I wouldn’t necessarily call that racist – I think it’s ok to say we have added obligation towards our neighbours. But the same argument was made against Jews escaping Nazi Germany (which is why we [*only allowed in the children*](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-23032023) ) and the same argument was made against Asians escaping persecution from Idi Amin in Uganda.

And yet, German Jews and Ugandan Asians – along with people from Hong Kong and Vietnam and many other refugees from across the world – have made Britain their home and contributed immensely towards British life and prosperity. We should treat people according to their need, not their proximity. We should treat Syrians and Ukrainians equally – only that would be fair.

If the scheme to deport refugees to Rwanda makes you uncomfortable, it should do. The cruelty is the point. Priti Patel and Johnson don’t care how much it costs, they think it sends a strong message and will act as a deterrent. But the same was said about [*Theresa May’s “hostile environment” policies*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/theresa-may-windrush-migrants-hostile-environment-b2086746.html) and they didn’t deter anyone either.

The British government’s starkly different approach towards Ukrainian and Syrian refugees should make us think twice. Do we want to be known for our generosity and fairness, or a country that doesn’t think twice about locking up refugees in a detention camp in a dictatorship?

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment, sign up to our free weekly Voices Dispatches newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independent-premium#newsletters)

I don’t believe the public supports this government’s cruelty. But they have been sold a lie that this is the only “tough decision” possible to stop trafficking and the channel deaths. That has [*already proven to be false*](https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/uk-news/rwanda-plan-failing-deter-migrants-23846239).

If this government was intent on stopping trafficking, it would go after the traffickers, not the desperate refugees. If there are too many refugees being housed in hotels, it’s because the home office has been shown to be incapable of processing people quickly and letting them earn their own living. Instead they are left in limbo, forced to rely on the state when they would prefer to be self-sufficient.

The Andriy Kovalenko I mentioned earlier may have been fictitious, but the story of his journey is shared by thousands of refugees. And it’s undoubtedly a story of refugees being treated differently because of their origin. That’s a story that should shame this government and its supporters.

**Load-Date:** June 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*‘No simple way’ for Ukrainian refugees to find permanent homes, UK hosts warn*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:665T-DH61-JBNF-W2Y8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 17, 2022 Wednesday 2:15 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:3

**Length:** 691 words

**Byline:** Jemma Crew

**Highlight:** Hundreds of Homes For Ukraine hosts have signed an open letter asking the Government to make it easier for refugees to find accommodation.

**Body**

More than a thousand UK hosts of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have signed an open letter asking the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) to make it easier for them to move into permanent homes.

The Government has been warned that “there is currently no simple way for them to find their own homes” amid pressures on social housing and the private rented sector.

Around 79,000 refugees have come to the UK under the Homes For Ukraine sponsorship scheme, with hosts expected to provide accommodation for at least six months.

Some of these placements will be approaching their end, with these refugees needing to find alternative accommodation either independently or with another sponsor.

Knowing that our guests can move on swiftly and safely when they and we are ready to do so will make a big difference, and will reduce stress for those who have already faced so much trauma fleeing a war, as well as for those of us hosting them

Open letter to Government

Already, more than 1,300 Ukrainian single households and families have been assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness as of July 2, amid placements breaking down and accommodation proving unsuitable.

Councils fear that homelessness could rise as initial six-month placements with some hosts end.

The Sanctuary Foundation, which organised the letter, said finding appropriate and affordable long-term accommodation “is one of the greatest challenges” to the scheme.

The charity published the letter on Tuesday and, as of Wednesday afternoon, it had been signed by more than 1,300 hosts who have opened up their homes to more than 3,000 refugees.

It reads: “As hosts who care deeply about the future of the Ukrainians in our homes, we ask the Government to help us ensure they are able to take the next steps towards integration in our communities.

“There is currently no simple way for them to find their own homes, with social housing and the private rental sector already stretched and difficult to access.”

The hosts are calling for the Government to take a series of practical steps to help refugees find permanent accommodation, including for [*Universal Credit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/universal-credit) housing allowance to be topped up for 12 months to enable refugees to remain in their local area.

They are calling for local authorities to be guarantors for those trying to rent a home, and for the Government to outline a clear re-matching process and to recruit more hosts.

And they echoed calls from the [*Local Government Association*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/local-government-association) to increase the £350 a month “thank you” payment, which would help hosts providing accommodation for longer than six months and those “bearing the brunt of the cost-of-living crisis”.

The letter adds: “Knowing that our guests can move on swiftly and safely when they and we are ready to do so will make a big difference, and will reduce stress for those who have already faced so much trauma fleeing a war, as well as for those of us hosting them.”

Krish Kandiah, director of the Sanctuary Foundation, said it is not a “finger-wagging letter” but one from people who “care deeply about finding solutions”.

[*People*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/people) are feeling frustrated because they are hitting issues such as not being able to rent because they have no credit history in the UK or they do not have enough money for a deposit, he told the PA news agency.

In other cases, people’s Universal Credit housing allowance is not enough to enable them to stay in or near where they are currently being hosted.

“That social network is invaluable when it comes to rebuilding a life here, when you’re so far from your normal life, your family, your loved ones,” he said.

He added: “This is a history-making moment, but we recognise there are teething problems with a programme of this scale and pace.”

A Government spokeswoman said: “The vast majority of sponsors want to provide support for longer than six months, but we are working closely with councils to ensure Ukrainians have access to suitable housing if they decide to move on.

“All arrivals have access to benefits from day one and we are giving councils an extra £10,500 per person to cover any extra costs.

“We are contacting sponsors and Ukrainians directly to outline next steps and the support available to them.”

**Load-Date:** August 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Sturgeon pledges £15m to help Ukrainian refugees arriving in Scotland*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6510-K621-JBNF-W13V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 16, 2022 Wednesday 5:49 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 742 words

**Byline:** Katrine Bussey

**Highlight:** The money is the Scottish Government's 'immediate response' to the humanitarian crisis prompted by the Russian invasion.

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the war could arrive in Scotland this weekend, [*Nicola Sturgeon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nicola-sturgeon) said as she announced £15 million of Government funding is being made available to help them.

The Scottish [*First Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/first-minister) said there will be "challenges" involved in "resettling thousands of displaced and traumatised people in such a short space of time".

But she said she is "confident" Scotland will "provide not just refuge but a warm welcome and a helping hand to people whose lives have been ripped apart".

Ms Sturgeon said: "We will open our doors and we will also open our hearts."

Her comments came in a statement to [*Holyrood*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/holyrood) after earlier confirming she would be "willing to step up" and open her own home to a refugee, if this is deemed to be necessary and appropriate.

However she added that someone escaping the conflict in Ukraine may not want to "come and live with the First Minister with all the scrutiny that might come with that".

With cities in Ukraine having come under attack from Russian forces for three weeks now, Ms Sturgeon described Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) as both "evil" and a "war criminal".

But she said Scots are "very, very keen" to offer support to those fleeing the conflict.

The First Minister has already said Scotland could welcome 3,000 refugees from Ukraine in the first phase, before taking in at least 10% of those who come to the UK.

A "super sponsor" scheme put forward by the devolved administrations in Wales and Scotland aims to get Ukrainians to these countries quicker, by providing them with temporary accommodation while a more permanent place is found for them.

That would mean refugees do not need to be matched with a sponsor with whom they can stay before coming to the UK.

"They would be able to come here to sanctuary and safety first," the First Minister told MSPs.

In a visit to [*@scotrefcouncil*](https://twitter.com/scotrefcouncil?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) this morning, First Minister [*@NicolaSturgeon*](https://twitter.com/NicolaSturgeon?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) heard about the vital work taking place to help those arriving from Ukraine and announced £1m in funding for two organisations already providing support. [*pic.twitter.com/FNo4MjEIcr*](https://t.co/FNo4MjEIcr) - First Minister (@ScotGovFM) [*March 16, 2022*](https://twitter.com/ScotGovFM/status/1504050435346374661?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

She said it should be "possible" and was "certainly our hope" for "the first 3,000 displaced Ukrainians to begin arriving in Scotland from as early as this weekend".

Ms Sturgeon added: "This is dependent on UK Government agreement, only the Home Office can issue the visas.

"But there is no good reason in my view for this agreement not to be reached, we hope and expect that it will be and crucially this is the basis on which we are now planning."

To help with this work, she said the [*Scottish Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scottish-government) is "allocating £15 million to support our immediate response".

The bulk of this cash - more than £11 million - will go to local councils, with £2.25 million being used to pay for temporary accommodation and £1.4 million for the Scottish Refugee Council (SRC).

The First Minister visited the charity's Glasgow headquarters earlier on Wednesday, where she was asked if she would take in a refugee herself.

Ms Sturgeon said she would "do that if that is necessary".

She added: "I'm not going to ask other people to do things I wouldn't be prepared to do myself."

She stressed that "everybody's circumstances are different", adding: "I don't think we should get into a position of making people feel bad if they are not in a position to offer accommodation."

Speaking about potentially taking someone in herself, she said: "In my case I am willing to do that if that is necessary and if that was thought appropriate.

"For somebody coming from Ukraine it may be that they wouldn't want to come and live with the First Minister with all the scrutiny that might come with that.

"But certainly if that was something that was necessary and considered to be appropriate, I am certainly willing to step up and do whatever I can."

Meanwhile, work is under way to establish welcome hubs where refugees can receive food and clothing, health care, advice and language support.

Decisions on where these hubs will be based will be made when more details are known about where and when refugees will start arriving in Scotland, Ms Sturgeon said.

She told Holyrood: "The challenges of resettling thousands of displaced and traumatised people in such a short space of time are significant and they should not be underestimated.

"But for all the undoubted challenges, I am confident that Scotland will live up to our humanitarian obligations."

**Load-Date:** March 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'Chaos': Ukrainian refugees placed with unvetted hosts*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65DD-MC21-F072-43F5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

May 9, 2022 Monday

Second Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 3

**Length:** 1142 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have been placed with unvetted hosts and in unsuitable homes because the government has yet to give councils any funding for vital safety checks.

Hosting arrangements under the Homes for Ukraine route are already breaking down, as it emerged the required DBS background checks are not always being done before refugees arrive in the UK.

Families who have fled the war have been forced to pay for hotel rooms or register as homeless after discovering their sponsor's housing is unsuitable, with reports of rodent infestations, broken boilers and hosts with drug addictions.

One Ukrainian woman arrived at her London host's house to discover she had only a 5 sq m bedroom to share with her six-year-old son, the heating was broken and there were mice running around. The host also refused to give her a key to the property.

The home was later inspected by the local council and deemed to be unsuitable, and they were moved into temporary accommodation.

The Independent's Refugees Welcome campaign is calling for the government to go further and faster to help Ukrainians fleeing their country.

Government data shows 19,500 of the 80,900 people who have applied have so far arrived under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, which opened on 18 March and enables refugees to "match" with UK residents willing to house them.

A further 17,900 of the 44,200 refugees who have applied under the Ukraine family scheme have arrived, since the initiative allowing them to join UK-based relatives was launched on 4 March.

The Home Office conducts checks against the police national computer before granting a Homes for Ukraine visa, but DBS checks and property inspections are carried out later by local authorities.

Councils are supposed to receive £10,500 per refugee to assist with those checks - at least one of which should be in person and happen before refugees arrive. But the government's own guidance states the payments will not be made until the end of June, which means they often aren't being done until after refugees arrive.

The Independent understands some local authorities have subsequently had to redeploy staff from family and children's social services to carry out the checks.

Shadow levelling up minister Lisa Nandy said it was "shameful" the government had "wasted so much generosity and let down the people of Ukraine by continually failing to get a grip and do its job".

"The government has failed to provide the information and support that people on the front line need to make this scheme work," she said. "The result is chaos, unacceptable delays and potentially homelessness for desperate people who have already fled a terrible war."

Hannah Clare, deputy leader of Brighton and Hove City Council, said because the council was yet to receive its funding and it was not provided with information on where a host lives and when the refugee will arrive, checks were taking place "a matter of weeks rather than days" after refugees get here.

"It's not possible for us to complete the property checks before they arrive, so it is happening after, which isn't ideal," she said. "We've had a case where that relationship's broken down before we could do that check, showing just how important it is. It really doesn't protect the refugees, or the hosts either. It's a danger all round."

In one case, Natalie, whose name has been changed to protect her identity, arrived in the UK at the start of April with her son, aged six, after matching with a female host through social media. But she was shocked at the living conditions when she arrived at the south London home.

"It was really dirty. We were shown the bedroom we would share and it was about five square metres. The window was very narrow - you couldn't open it to get fresh air," she told The Independent.

"The boiler wasn't working, so after the flight we couldn't shower. She gave us double blankets, but it was so cold. I noticed the house was full of mice. They were running around, but what could we do? I was in another country. It was 10 or 11pm."

Sutton Council carried out a property check the next day and Natalie was told the home was unsuitable and she would be moved into emergency accommodation within a few days.

In the meantime, Natalie faced more challenges. "She [the host] wouldn't give me a key. One day we went out and when we came back in the evening she was out. She wasn't replying to my messages. We were so cold. It was a Sunday so there was no cafe or anything around."

The pair have since been moved to temporary accommodation where they feel more settled. "We just wanted to live a normal life, but we came from war to that trouble," she said.

Sutton Council said visas were issued before checks are completed and because it does not receive information on when refugees are due to arrive, it was difficult for it prioritisechecks for imminent arrivals.

The Local Government Association said councils across the country had reported issues with the information they get from the government, saying it is arriving too slowly, there is data missing, host contact details are not always correct and it does not provide refugees' arrival dates.

Svitlana Opanasenko, a volunteer at Ukraine Social Club,said one young Ukrainian man arrived at a host property to find someone in the family was taking drugs.

"He said he couldn't stay there. He booked a hotel for three nights, but he didn't have money to stay longer. He was looking for a family to stay with, and eventually, luckily, he found one," she said. "He reported it to the local council and it turns out they didn't check the sponsor, and then they realised it was not suitable."

Ms Opanasenko also described cases where hosts have told refugees they need to do chores in the home to "repay the service". She asked: "Why is there no database for people to match with hosts who have already been checked?"

A government spokesperson said it would seek to find a further sponsor if a sponsor/guest relationship broke down, and if a suitable one could not be found, refugees would be entitled to housing support.

"We are giving councils £10,500 per person to provide wrap-around support for Ukrainians on the scheme. They must make at least one in-person visit to a sponsor's property and they have a duty to make sure the guest is safe and well once they've arrived" the spokesperson said.

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The Independent - Daily Edition

May 9, 2022 Monday

First Edition

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**Length:** 1142 words

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**Load-Date:** May 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Thousands of Ukrainian refugees living in hotels as councils struggle to deal with rising homelessness*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6788-DC21-JBNF-W0P2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

January 7, 2023 Saturday 8:50 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 796 words

**Byline:** Holly Bancroft

**Highlight:** Charities warned the government was ‘repeating its mistakes’ by letting Ukrainians be housed in hotels

**Body**

Thousands of ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) are being housed in hotels as councils struggle to deal with a rising number becoming homeless.

Nearly 3,000 [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) [*households*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/households) have presented themselves as homeless to English councils since the end of February 2022.

And with renting privately becoming “all but impossible” and limited social housing available, many councils have had no choice but to place them in temporary accommodation when their Homes for Ukraine or family sponsorships break down.

Councils have said that the “growing number” of Ukrainians presenting as homeless is placing pressure on local services.

Freedom of information figures obtained by The Independent from 134 of 181 district councils in England show at least 668 households – 1,618 people – have been accommodated in hotels since March 2022. A further 406 households have been placed in temporary accommodation, such as a local authority flat or other social housing.

At least another 4,107 are being housed in hotels in Wales and Scotland, many for months on end. In Scotland and Wales, Ukrainians who arrive on the Super Sponsor scheme are put in hotels or on cruise liners until they are matched with a host family. This is different to the system in England, where Ukrainians must present themselves as homeless to councils before they are found alternative accommodation.

Opora, a charity that helps Ukrainians in the UK, warned the numbers could be much higher.

According to a recent survey of over 3000 Ukrainians in the UK, around 4 per cent said they were still awaiting allocation to sponsor housing. With 110,000 arrivals on the Homes for Ukraine (HfU) visas as of mid-December, that could mean more than 4,400 people, director Stan Benes said.

A further 3 per cent of respondents said that they were already living in some form of social housing with council support – the equivalent of 3,300 people.

Charities warned that the government was repeating the mistakes it made with Afghan refugees by letting thousands of Ukrainians move into unsuitable hotel accommodation.

Lauren Scott, executive director of charity Refugees at Home, said: “People opened their doors under Homes for Ukraine in 2022 as an alternative to housing refugees in hotels. But with no proper move-on strategy in place that’s exactly where many Ukrainians may end up in 2023.”

She added: “The government needs to learn from the experiences of Afghans housed in hotel accommodation and not make the same mistakes. We know of people living in hotels for over a year, with families of five or six people sharing one room.

Are you currently being housed in a hotel or temporary accommodation? Get in touch at [*holly.bancroft@independent.co.uk*](mailto:holly.bancroft@independent.co.uk)

“There are no cooking facilities, no privacy, little autonomy. There are alternatives to hotel accommodation and some councils are developing schemes to help Ukrainians move into private rented accommodation.”

Adis Sehic, at the migrant charity Work Rights Centre, said that the growing number of Ukrainians being put in hotels would become increasingly costly.

Although councils receive over £10,000 per Ukrainian on the Homes for Ukraine scheme, they do not get specific funding to help house Ukrainians who have come to the UK on the Family Scheme – causing them to dip into their already overstretched homelessness budgets.

He said: “Our frontline team have seen many Ukrainians turning to local authorities for assistance with securing alternative forms of accommodation, given that their hosting arrangements have now broken down.”

Mr Sehic’s team works predominantly with London councils and he said that there was an acute shortage of appropriate social housing in the capital. He added: “We have and expect to see more families placed into costly, temporary accommodation.”

A spokesperson for the Local Government Association, which represents more than 350 councils across England and Wales, said: “We have been raising concerns with government on the growing number of Ukrainians presenting as homeless to councils.

“There is a real crisis in the refugee and asylum system which is compounded by a housing crisis. We are pleased that the government has been working with the LGA and councils on funding.”

A government spokesperson said: “Homes for Ukraine has seen 109,000 Ukrainians welcomed to the UK, thanks to the generosity of sponsors, with most settling in well.

“We know the vast majority of sponsors want to provide support beyond six months, but in the minority of cases where family or sponsor relationships break down, temporary accommodation is a crucial safety net.”

They continued: “We are providing councils with extensive funding to support arrivals and they have a duty to ensure families are not left without a roof over their heads.”

**Load-Date:** January 7, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Angelina Jolie visits Ukrainian refugees in Italian children's hospital*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6546-96F1-JBNF-W2K7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 31, 2022 Thursday 7:06 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,FILM,CULTURE; Version:1

**Length:** 349 words

**Byline:** Sam Moore

**Highlight:** Actor and UN special envoy was visiting Bambino Gesú hospital in Rome

**Body**

[*Angelina Jolie*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/angelina-jolie) has visited with Ukrainian child refugees in Italy.

The Oscar winning actor, who is also a special envoy for the UN, visited a pediatric hospital just outside of Vatican City that is caring for children who have fled the conflict between Ukraine and Russia.

During her visit to Rome's Bambino Gesú, Jolie sat and spoke to many young patients, some of whom have cancer. She also met with doctors and nurses who provide care at the hospital

It is estimated by Unicef that [*2 million child refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-seattle-sacramento-joe-biden-mexico-b2047832.html%22%20title=%22Ukrainians%20in%20US%20mobilize%20to%20help%20100,000%20expected%20refugees) have left Ukraine since the onset of war on 24 February. They also estimate that around 2.5 million children are displaced within Ukraine, with 60 per cent of children forced to leave their homes.

Jolie has a long history of [*supporting refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/angelina-jolie-yemen-ukraine-refugees-b2030272.html%22%20title=%22Angelina%20Jolie%20says%20'we%20cannot%20be%20selective%20about%20who%20deserves%20support'%20as%20she%20meets%20refugees%20in%20Yemen) and in 2012 was named Special Envoy for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The actor was also made an [*honorary Dame Commander*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/angelina-jolie-presented-with-honorary-damehood-by-the-queen-9787619.html%22%20title=%22Angelina%20Jolie%20presented%20with%20honorary%20damehood%20by%20the%20Queen) of the Order of St Michael and St George for her work campaigning to end sexual and gender based violence in war zones.

She has previously visited conflict zones such as Yemen and Burkina Faso to support refugees.

hollywood: I think will smith...meanwhile angelina jolie: [*pic.twitter.com/PaL9TqVmSr*](https://t.co/PaL9TqVmSr) - Risbek (@iamrisbek) [*March 31, 2022*](https://twitter.com/iamrisbek/status/1509545146345472003?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Jolie most recently starred in superhero film Eternals and crime thriller Those Who Wish Me Dead alongside Nicholas Hoult and Jon Bernthal.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 31, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Newly arrived Ukrainian refugees forced to register as homeless in UK as councils 'left to pick up the pieces'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:653R-HTD1-DY4H-K30K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 29, 2022 Tuesday 1:43 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:3

**Length:** 986 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Exclusive: Local authorities 'scrambling' to house refugees whose relatives cannot accommodate them

**Body**

Newly arrived [***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) are registering as [*homeless*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homeless) in the UK, leaving local [*councils*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/councils) to "pick up the pieces" and arrange emergency housing for them with no additional funding from central government.

[*Families*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/families) who have fled the Russian invasion and been granted [*visas*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/visas) on the Ukraine family scheme are arriving in Britain without anywhere to stay because their UK-based relatives do not have space in their homes to house them, local authorities and charities have warned.

The Ukraine family scheme, opened by the Home Office on 4 March, allows ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have relatives in the UK to join them. No funding is provided to councils under the scheme because the presumption is that refugees will stay with their relatives.

However, it has emerged that in some cases UK-based family members do not have space to accommodate their relatives, and that councils and charities are having to "scramble" to find them alternative housing.

The Local Government Association (LGA), which represents 350 councils across England and Wales, has said local authorities are seeing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** presenting as homeless, and is calling on ministers to provide funding to local government to support these people.

The Independent is raising money for the people of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) - if you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

Under a separate visa scheme, which was launched by the government on 18 March and allows Ukrainians without family members in the UK to be hosted by members of the British public, councils are given £10,500 per refugee in the first year.

An LGA spokesperson told The Independent: "Councils would like the same arrangements to be in place for the family visa route as the Homes for Ukraine scheme. This includes advance notice of new arrivals and the funding to support them when they are here.

"We are also discussing with government whether it would be possible to match new arrivals with sponsors registered under the Homes for Ukraine scheme if they cannot stay with their family."

The Department for Levelling Up has said people may not apply for a visa under Homes for Ukraine scheme from within the UK.

Oleksandr Polishchuk, a volunteer at Support Ukraine, which is based in in West London, said he had come across dozens of Ukrainians who have arrived in recent weeks and did not have accommodation, and have now been housed by local councils.

He described one case of a couple aged over 60 with the 96-year-old mother of one of them, who came to join their daughter under the family scheme but who could not fit into her studio flat.

"She was already living their with her two young children. They went there at first but it was unsustainable and unbearable. They picked up their bags and arrived at Victoria coach station and were referred to us by police. They had nowhere to stay. They are now being housed by the council," he said.

"We try to help and direct people as much as we can. There is immediate need. We need to place them overnight somewhere. That has been a struggle, but we are managing somehow with support of local charities and councils.

"The government issued a policy, but left implementations to the local councils. The system is not in place. We are working with them closely and trying to figure out solutions."

Mr Polishchuk added: "No one expected the scheme to be working properly immediately after it was issued, but people are arriving here now. They often don't know English. They don't understand what is happening or what to expect.

"There has been a lot of failings right now. It has been chaotic. Councils want to provide support, but lack of clarity and preparation made it difficult. They've been left to pick up the pieces and they are making steady progress."

A spokesperson for London Councils, which represents London boroughs, said: "As people fleeing the conflict in Ukraine have started to arrive in London, boroughs are seeing numbers of people presenting as homeless and are providing appropriate accommodation and support.

"We are working with government to discuss how best to care for and support arrivals while balancing existing pressures."

Charlie Richards, a volunteer with the Ukrainian Centre in Reading, said some Ukraine family visa holders who cannot stay with their relatives had started to move in with people informally offering to host, raising safeguarding concerns.

"My huge concern is that these informal hosts are not flagged to the council. Those people aren't checked for safeguarding. The council is trying to do the right thing, but all the issues are with the Department for Levelling Up and the Home Office."

A government spokesperson said: "The Ukraine family scheme is helping thousands of people fleeing horrific persecution in Ukraine be reunited with family in the UK.

"Our expectation is people arriving through the family scheme will be initially supported by their loved ones, so they can find work and integrate into the UK. In the exceptional case someone is left without support from their families, Ukrainians will be able to access local council support."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 29, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Britons hoping to host Ukrainian refugees will need to know their names first*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650J-4KS1-DY4H-K0S6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 2:53 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:3

**Length:** 1057 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Campaigners concerned that naming process will mean 'only refugees with connections to UK will benefit'

**Body**

British families wishing to host [***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) under the government's new sponsorship scheme will be required to name them first, prompting concern that those without links to the UK will be "excluded" from the programme.

The government is to launch a website today that will allow people in the UK to register their interest in hosting Ukrainians who have fled the Russian invasion - which would see them paid £350 per month -with the process of matching hosts to refugees to begin from Friday.

Levelling Up minister [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) , whose department is running the scheme and who will be announcing more details about the scheme later this afternoon, [*said on Sunday*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-refugees-social-media-michael-gove-b2034885.html) that he hoped individuals and community groups would be able to "match" with refugees using social media, adding that charities would help in the process.

The Independent understands that the department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) will require all hosts to put forward the names of refugees they can sponsor, and is anticipating that charities will come forward and offer to facilitate the matching process.

Charities have expressed alarm about this approach, warning that requiring prospective hosts to name refugees they wish to sponsor will mean that it is "only those with connections to the UK will benefit".

Jenni Regan, chief executive at IMIX, a charity that aims to create a better conversation around migration, said this risked "excluding vulnerable people seeking refuge", adding: "The naming principle may also add to a potentially lengthy and complicated visa process when people fleeing Ukraine need immediate help.

"Additionally, there are concerns that people from Ukraine are not being treated as refugees and they are not given guaranteed protection under the UN refugee convention. It's likely to still only benefit those with a link, leading to a two-tier system of asylum."

Lou Calvey, of Refugee Action, echoed her concerns, saying there were "huge risks" with requiring sponsors to know the names of refugees because it meant more vulnerable people would struggle to access the scheme.

"People who are well-connected or more social media literate and will be able to put themselves out there more might generate a match more easily," she said.

"What about those who might not speak English, who have significant mental health issues, who are physically unwell, or who might not have any access to social media - how are we going to reach them? How are you supposed to gain access to the UK if you're in that sort of situation?"

Ms Calvey said the communication from government with NGOs in the sector has been poor and accused ministers of "abdicating all responsibility".

"I'm not saying it's impossible to do, but if you're going to do it right and you're going to make sure that whatever you do has equal access to the most vulnerable and marginalised people. You've really got to do that right and you've got to talk to us about how you're going to do it," she added.

Other experts say that the naming system would be the best method of operating the scheme, as it would allow large numbers to come to Britain quickly and enable civic society to take the lead, rather than government departments.

The Independent is raising money for the people of Ukraine - if you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

Sunder Katwala, director of British Future, said: "I can see why it feels like it slows it down, but I would say - and there is strong evidence for this, certainly from Canada - that if you want a system to scale, that is definitely the best way to do it.

"The reason is that you've got a choice: whichever way we do this, by the end of the week, half a million people in Britain are going to want to be part of this scheme, and then somebody is going to match them up. Who do we think is best placed to find and attract Ukrainians who want to come to Britain and match them to people in Britain?

"Our choices are Priti Patel's Home Office or British society as a whole. And I think British society as a whole - while it's got a bigger job if the government doesn't do this - is going to do it with more energy, more ambition, more creativity and more capacity than the government would."

However, Mr Katwala opposed Mr Gove's suggestion that prospective hosts use social media to seek out ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to sponsor under the scheme, saying: "Trawling social media is a terrible message for safeguarding."

It comes as [*charities expressed concern*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-modern-slavery-exploitation-sponsorship-uk-b2035384.html) that the scheme could lead to potential exploitation and abuse of refugees, warning that "red flags could be missed in the vetting of potential hosts".

Lauren Agnew, human trafficking policy expert at charity CARE, said: "We can be certain that some of this number will be seeing the Homes for Ukraine scheme as an opportunity to turn a profit at the expense of vulnerable individuals seeking refuge in the UK.

"Setting refugees up in homes around the UK is not the end of the story. There must be follow-up checks to ensure these individuals are not being exploited."

The government has said each host will be checked against the police national computer for security concerns, and that all refugees will be registered with GPs and schools, where safeguarding checks will be carried out.

The Home Office's Ukraine family scheme, which launched on 4 March, has so far issued 4,400 visas out of 32,400 applications that have been opened - meaning the UK is falling far short of the numbers of Ukrainians that other European countries have welcomed.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees could arrive in Scotland this weekend - Nicola Sturgeon*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650Y-XC71-JBNF-W3DC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 16, 2022 Wednesday 1:08 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 831 words

**Byline:** Katrine Bussey

**Highlight:** The First Minister said she is willing to house a refugee herself, if deemed appropriate.

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the war in their homeland could arrive in Scotland this weekend, [*Nicola Sturgeon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nicola-sturgeon) has said.

The [*First Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/first-minister) also said she is "willing to step up" and open her own home to a refugee, if this is deemed to be necessary and appropriate.

However she added that someone escaping the conflict in Ukraine may not want to "come and live with the First Minister with all the scrutiny that might come with that".

What we are seeking to achieve and certainly planning for here in Scotland is for people to start arriving here as early as this weekend

Nicola Sturgeon

With cities in Ukraine having come under attack from Russian forces for three weeks now, Ms Sturgeon branded Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) a "war criminal" and said she hopes he will be held accountable for his actions.

As talks take place between Russia and Ukraine aimed at resolving the conflict, Ms Sturgeon said: "We're all desperately hoping the peace talks will reach a positive conclusion and bring the war to an end.

"But it is hard to see that and keep that sense of hope while Vladimir Putin, as well as sitting round the negotiating table, is flattening Ukrainian cities, killing Ukrainian men, women and children, attacking a maternity hospital last week.

"Vladimir Putin is a war criminal and should be seen as such and I hope in the fullness of time will be held to account as such."

She said people in Scotland are "very, very keen" to offer support to Ukrainians, and she stressed the need to "harness that as much as possible".

The First Minister has already said Scotland could welcome 3,000 refugees from Ukraine as "an immediate step" before taking in "at least a proportionate share" of those people coming to the UK.

A "super sponsor" scheme put forward by the devolved administrations in [*Wales*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wales) and Scotland aims to get Ukrainians to these countries quicker, by providing them with temporary accommodation while a more permanent place is found for them.

Pleased to welcome members of the Ukrainian community and FM [*@NicolaSturgeon*](https://twitter.com/NicolaSturgeon?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) to our office today. Lots to discuss about plans to support greater numbers of people fleeing the war [*pic.twitter.com/XnltmqiIm7*](https://t.co/XnltmqiIm7) - Scottish Refugee Council (@scotrefcouncil) [*March 16, 2022*](https://twitter.com/scotrefcouncil/status/1504037288606638081?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Speaking on a visit to the Scottish Refugee Council (SRC) headquarters in Glasgow, Ms Sturgeon stressed that when people arrive in Scotland is dependent on the UK [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) "as it is the UK Government that has the ability to grant visas and allow entry to the country".But she added: "What we are seeking to achieve and certainly planning for here in Scotland is for people to start arriving here as early as this weekend."If we are able to get the super sponsor proposal, which the UK Government have given agreement in principle to, if we can get that launched to run in parallel with the first phase of the wider UK scheme, that would allow people to start arriving here from the weekend."Asked if she would host a refugee, Ms Sturgeon said would "do that if that is necessary".She added: "I'm not going to ask other people to do things I wouldn't be prepared to do myself."She stressed that "everybody's circumstances are different", adding: "I don't think we should get into a position of making people feel bad if they are not in a position to offer accommodation."Speaking about potentially taking someone in herself, she said: "In my case I am willing to do that if that is necessary and if that was thought appropriate."For somebody coming from Ukraine it may be that they wouldn't want to come and live with the First Minister with all the scrutiny that might come with that."But certainly if that was something that was necessary and considered to be appropriate, I am certainly willing to step up and do whatever I can."In a visit to [*@scotrefcouncil*](https://twitter.com/scotrefcouncil?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) this morning, First Minister [*@NicolaSturgeon*](https://twitter.com/NicolaSturgeon?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) heard about the vital work taking place to help those arriving from Ukraine and announced £1m in funding for two organisations already providing support. [*pic.twitter.com/FNo4MjEIcr*](https://t.co/FNo4MjEIcr) - First Minister (@ScotGovFM) [*March 16, 2022*](https://twitter.com/ScotGovFM/status/1504050435346374661?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Ms Sturgeon also announced more than £1 million of funding for the SRC to allow it to recruit additional staff ahead of an increase in requests for support.

Ukraine Advice Scotland, which is run by Scottish charity JustRight Scotland, will also receive Scottish Government cash to help it continue to provide free and confidential legal advice for those displaced by the war in Ukraine.

Ms Sturgeon said: "Scotland is ready to play its part to offer safety and sanctuary to those forced to leave their homes because of Russia's brutal invasion, and it is heartening to see preparations for increased support, advice and information already being put in place.

"We are determined to do everything in our power to give them the warmest welcome possible when people do start to arrive and we will need organisations like SRC and JustRight Scotland, as well as the support of the people of Scotland, to do just that."

**Load-Date:** March 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees find jobs, kindness, as they settle in*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6550-63W1-DY4H-K18H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 4, 2022 Monday 7:28 AM GMT

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**Length:** 931 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Having escaped from Russian shelling, ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are now focused on building new lives - temporarily or permanently

**Body**

Nataliya Hibska quickly brushes her teeth and makes the bed. She is rushing to her new job.

From a small hostel room in eastern [*Warsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warsaw) , Hibska, a Ukrainian refugee, is slowly rebuilding her life, which was abruptly upended by Russia's invasion of her homeland.

European Union member nations like Poland and [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) - the two neighboring countries to have received the most refugees from Ukraine - have launched programs to help them integrate.

The 47-year-old former manager of a private education center from [*Kharkiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kharkiv) , in eastern Ukraine, Hibska fled her hometown after a second wave of shelling. When bombs struck a nearby military warehouse, rattling her home, she knew it was time to leave and seek refuge for herself and her 11-year-old son.

"We were afraid to go out, to let them go out into the yard, we were afraid to let them ride bicycles or play football. We were just so scared and we decided that that was enough. It was time to flee," she said, describing the decision she and many of her neighbors were forced to take.

With only some basic belongings they embarked on what became a challenging five-day journey to the safety of Poland.

Three weeks on, and by a combination of help extended by ordinary people in Poland and policies put in place at the national and municipal level, Hibska and her son are starting to feel safe.

They have a simple yet welcoming home. Her son is enrolled at a local school, and she has started a new job as cook at a Ukrainian food bar launched specially to provide employment to refugees.

The workday starts early with food preparation ahead of the lunchtime rush.

Hibska and the five other Ukrainian women working here, all recently arrived refugees, roll out dough and chop fillings for traditional Ukrainian dumplings, pelmeni, that are a staple.

"I used to have five people working for me and I organized (youth) camps," she said, reflecting on her past life in Kharkiv. "I am not embarrassed by the fact that currently I am working in a kitchen."

Warsaw city authorities say work helps refugees integrate but is also filling vacancies in the health sector and in education, where special classes are being launched to assist newly arrived Ukrainian children.

Of the more than 4 million refugees that have fled Ukraine, over 2.4 million have crossed into Poland. While many have traveled onward throughout Europe, plenty have stayed in Poland which is offering free temporary accommodation, medical care, education and some social benefits. Some 625,000 refugees have sought and obtained Polish ID numbers entitling them to all that for 18 months.

But living off benefits was not something Nataliya would accept for too long.

"Volunteers help us with everything. We can live off Poland, but I don't see that as a good thing," she said. " I need to work. You won't get much doing nothing."

Her new job helps provide for her and her son, Roman, and anything left over she hopes to send to her parents and husband, still living in Kharkiv.

Her good fortune in Poland was thanks to a free hostel run by a family of developers and hotel owners. The same company launched a Ukrainian food bar specifically to provide jobs to refugees.

The place opened 10 days ago and is quickly gaining in fame, with customers intent on helping Ukrainians all the while enjoying a good meal.

"The forms of help are evolving" said Karolina Samulowska awaiting her order. "At fist there was aid, sandwiches, railway stations."

Now, at the bar "on the one hand the products are here and promote the country, on the other hand the money moves on, giving meaning to the refugees' lives."

As a regular flow of customers comes by to pick up lunch, the restaurant's manager, Dorota Wereszczynska, reflects on the success.

"We were not expecting such popularity," she said. "Our motto is "You buy. You eat. You help."

Further south on Europe's map, Romania has taken in more than 600,000 refugees from Ukraine.

Flavia Boghiu, the deputy mayor of the central city of Brasov, says the key to integration is to help people be "as autonomous as possible."

The city's refugee centers offer support and information on work offers, kindergartens and other activities, she told the [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) , and local authorities proudly boast that of 1,200 refugees who arrived in the city, more than 75% want to stay.

The employment process is "much slower than normal, because most of them don't have paperwork with them. ... Also you need to discuss with them to understand their particular situation. If you have a mother with three children you need to see what you're going to do with the children (while) she's at work," Boghiu said.

Four generations of Anastasia Yevdokimova's family fled from their homes near the Black Sea. The 21-year-old beauty industry worker came to Brasov with her grandmother, her mother and her 3-year-old son. Brasov drew them with its impressive architecture and access to nature "which helps to distract from the circumstances," Yevdokimova said.

They've already had to seek urgent medical care for the child and found it to be quick and attentive. That reassured them.

Another refugee, 27-year-old Karina Buiukli, a human resources manager from the Black Sea port city of Odesa, and her family have been offered free accommodation with a Brasov couple, but were not expecting the great kindness they have met with.

"Our hosts, the owners of this apartment, are so kind and now we're just like friends," Buiukli said. "They showed us the town, they asked us to their house, it seems like we've know each other for a long (time)."

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McGrath reported from Brasov, Romania.

**Load-Date:** April 4, 2022

**End of Document**



[*New radio station helps Ukrainian refugees adapt in Prague*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:654J-7PB1-DY4H-K4GW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 2, 2022 Saturday 7:13 AM GMT

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**Length:** 887 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** A new Prague-based internet radio stated has started to broadcast news, information and music tailored to the day-to-day concerns of some 300,000 refugees who have so far arrived in the Czech Republic after Russia launched its military assault against Ukraine

**Body**

This is Radio Ukraine calling.

A new Prague-based internet radio station has started to broadcast news, information and music tailored to the day-to-day concerns of some 300,000 refugees who have arrived in the [*Czech Republic*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/czech-republic) since [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) launched its military assault against Ukraine.

In a studio at the heart of the Czech capital, radio veterans work together with absolute beginners to provide the refugees with what they need to know to settle as smoothly as possible in a new country.

The staff of 10 combines people who have fled Ukraine in recent weeks with those who have been living abroad for years. No matter who they are, their common goal is to help fellow Ukrainians and their homeland facing the brutal Russian invasion.

Natalia Churikova, an experienced journalist with Prague-based Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty said she couldn't say no to an offer to become the broadcaster's editor-in-chief.

"It was for my people, for people who really needed help, who really needed support, something that would help them start a new live or restart their lives here after they have lived through very bad things trying to escape from Ukraine," Churikova said.

Staffer [*Sofia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sofia) Tatomyr is one of those who left to escape the war.

The 22-year-old from the western town of Kalush was making plans to move to another city in Ukraine when a friend called one morning: "Sofia, the war has just begun."

Her parents and older brother opted to stay home, but they wanted her to join her aunt in Prague.

"It happened all of a sudden," she said. She boarded a bus alone in Cherniutsi and arrived 28 hours later in the Czech capital, a city she'd never visited.

"When I was already abroad, I remember the moment that I was crying and I was trying to buy a ticket and I couldn't spell what ticket I need. It was really difficult," she said.

Tatomyr worked as graphic designer and singer in Ukraine after getting a degree as a publisher and media editor. Radio broadcasting was part of her courses at the university. To her surprise, her aunt's brother found an announcement about jobs for a new Ukrainian radio station.

She said she needed "some time to understand that not everybody can be at the frontline at the war and everybody has to do what he or she can do the best."

"So this is how I'm cheering myself up that I'm doing my profession, that I'm doing what I can do the best, and this is the best way I can help our people, I can help Ukraine. This is how I'm thinking about it," she said.

Safe in Prague, she was still trying to come to terms with the invasion of her homeland.

"It's horrible," she said. "I can't still find any logical explanation for what they're doing and why they're doing it. In the 21st century, a war? Why? We were a peaceful nation living just our lives."

Another announcer, Marharyta Golobrodska, was working as a copywriter for a software company when she received a call from Churikova, whom she knew from an internship at Radio Free Europe.

"I used to consider those who get up early to be ready to work from 6 a.m. crazy, but that's what I do now and I thoroughly enjoy it," Golobrodska said. "That's what I always wanted to do, to be helpful for my country, even though I live so far away."

For 12 hours each weekday - and 11 hours on weekends - Radio Ukraine plays Ukrainian and western music while presenting news of Ukraine and the Czech Republic together with information for refugees every 15 minutes. It includes details about where they can get the documents they need from local authorities, how to get a job or medical treatment, or how to find a place for children at schools. Children can listen to Ukrainian fairy tales.

A native of the southern city of Mykolaiv, Golobrodska has lived in the Czech Republic for eight-and-a-half years. After the invasion, she traveled to western Ukraine to meet her mother and 9-year-old sister and drive them to safety. In Prague, she got them involved in her broadcast.

"My mum, for example, told me she'd like to hear what she's not supposed to do here. For example, that she can't park the car anywhere she wants to like in Ukraine," she said.

Bohemia Media, which operates several radio stations in the Czech Republic, came up with the idea to launch the station. It provided a studio and its people cooperated with the Ukrainian embassy, the local Ukrainian community and others to make it reality in three weeks. It also covers the salaries.

Lukas Nadvornik, the owner of the Mediapark, a company that represents Bohemia Media, said the plan is for the station to remain on air as long as it's needed. The key task for now is to let know as many potential listeners as possible about its existence.

[*One*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/one) of them is Sophia Medvedeva. The 23-year old web designer couldn't hold back tears as she talked about the recent six-day drive with her mother and younger brother from Mykolaiv to Krakow, Poland.

But in Prague, she joined her fiancé and Radio Ukraine helped her adapt to a new life.

"I'm so amazed about the chance to listen to Ukrainian music when I'm not in my homeland. I feel that I'm not alone," she said. Her only recommendation for it is to invite a psychologist to "advise the ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** about how to fight the survivor syndrome and how to fight depression."

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Follow the AP's coverage of the war at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine).

**Load-Date:** April 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'We feel safe here': Ukrainian refugees meet PM at Downing Street*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65FC-2281-JBNF-W2HT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 13, 2022 Friday 6:33 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 785 words

**Byline:** Rebecca Speare-Cole

**Highlight:** Boris Johnson greeted a group of around 10 refugees.

**Body**

Ukrainian families who have been housed in the UK through refugee schemes have said they "feel safe here" after meeting [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) at [*Downing Street*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/downing-street).

The [*Prime Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prime-minister) greeted a group of around 10 refugees at the official residence in central London.

Some of the group had been housed through the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine Scheme and others had arrived through the Ukraine Family Scheme - both of which were set up by the [*UK Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk-government) in the wake of the Russian invasion.

Speaking to the PA news agency, Natalia Kogut, 40, said her family feel "safe" and they are "thankful" to Mr Johnson for the support Ukraine has received.

Ms Kogut said she fled Kyiv with her mother Malyna, 64, her daughter Melisa, 11, and her son Akim, 18, and arrived in the UK on March 5.

The family have since been taken in by an elderly woman who lives in a "big house" in Birmingham, she explained.

The 41-year-old said "we feel safe here" but added that they are worried for her husband, who is still in Ukraine, delivering supplies and food.

Asked about meeting Mr Johnson, she said: "It was amazing - even British nationals not always can say they have met the Prime Minister and been to the residence and for us it's amazing."

"The children are so happy," she said, adding that her daughter Melisa sang the Ukrainian national anthem to the Prime Minister.

"I was so proud - people were crying hearing it," Ms Kogut said.

"We are very thankful to the Prime Minister because he is number one who helps Ukraine now and not just ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** here but Ukraine with weapons and I don't know if Ukraine wouldn't exist maybe any more so we are very thankful for that."

On her family finding a sponsor, she said: "We are very happy and I don't know what to say and we are very thankful and people are very kind really.

"Just we can think about how it was difficult crossing the border with this road and this bombing and what we remember, and here we're happy but there are people left there who don't have such possibility, and some people we knew - they perished in Bucha.

"So it's mixed feelings because sometimes I even feel some kind of guilt because I'm here safe."

Nina Herasymenko, 41, and her son Bohdon, 16, arrived in the UK on April 10 after fleeing the Russian-occupied region of Kherson, near Crimea, three days earlier.

The pair arrived through the Ukraine Family Scheme and are staying with Ms Herasymenko's sister Tatiana Krupenko, 35, who lives in Birmingham.

Ms Krupenko said: "It was a bit touch and go whether they would get there."

She translated for her sister, who said they had to get in the car with no possessions or clothes and drive through a minefield to escape the region.

Ms Krupenko said: "They went in hope that they would actually make it somewhere because they were running low on food supplies, there was nothing in the supermarket at that point, no supplies, no nothing."

She said her sister had described what it was like living in Kherson, saying: "You don't know who's going to be next, you can't sleep because constant missiles, constant shooting, you don't know whether it's going to hit you or someone else, the places that you loved have gone, the hopes and dreams of 16-year-olds have vanished."

Ms Herasymenko then explained how they were forced to drive through a minefield and over a railway bridge as the Russians bombed the roads.

"She said: 'I genuinely didn't believe we're going to make it through'," Ms Krupenko translated.

Asked how she felt that her sister and nephew were in the UK, the 35-year-old said: "Amazing, just so grateful that they're safe."

On meeting Mr Johnson, Ms Krupenko said he was: "Very, very welcoming".

She added that her family are "very grateful for the opportunity but also for all of Boris's help".

"He was really down to earth, chatting to everyone, making jokes, we taught him a few Ukrainian words," Ms Krupenko said.

"It's just been really lovely and an amazing experience, he's just like a normal human being."

Alicja Kaczmarek, who works for the Polish Expat Association, which supports central and eastern European migrants and helped organise the meeting, said Ukrainians have had "mixed experiences" getting to the UK.

She said: "We have a long list of families waiting to come to homes from Ukraine but the process is very slow.

"The people we supported have had mixed experiences," Ms Kaczmarek added.

"But to be honest, things are changing every single week and it's really speeding up now."

On the future of the schemes, she said: "We don't know what is going to happen after the six months.

"We worry that there might not be a continuation - there's no reassurances at the moment so everything is very short term.

"But it's working, more and more people are coming."

**Load-Date:** May 13, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ben Stiller reflects on meeting President Zelensky and Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:664B-STB1-DY4H-K4N5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 10, 2022 Wednesday 9:02 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 426 words

**Byline:** Connie Evans

**Highlight:** The American actor visited the war-torn country in June.

**Body**

[*Ben Stiller*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ben-stiller) has said he was “really taken by the resilience of the people of Ukraine, and of the president”, while reflecting on the time he spent in war-torn Ukraine.

The 56-year-old [*American*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/american) actor and producer, who gained recognition for his roles in films such as Zoolander and the Meet The Parents trilogy, visited the country in June as part of his long-term role as a goodwill ambassador for [*UNHCR*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/unhcr) , the UN refugee agency.

Just over a month after his return, Stiller expressed his awe at meeting [*President*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/president) [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) and Ukrainian citizens, telling Deadline: “I was really taken by the resilience of the people of Ukraine, and of the President.

View this post on Instagram [*A post shared by Ben Stiller (@benstiller)*](https://www.instagram.com/p/Ce_APEXuvHJ/?utm_source=ig_embed&utm_campaign=loading) “His incredible sense of how he has risen to the moment and offered his people leadership and true resolve to get through this awful situation.”Since the war with Russia began in February, millions of Ukrainians have fled to Poland.Before his visit to Ukraine, Stiller also went to the large south-eastern Polish city of Rzeszow, close to the Ukrainian border.He started working with the UNHCR in 2016 and has travelled with the body to meet refugees in Germany, Jordan, Guatemala and Lebanon.Speaking about the “overwhelming” experience of seeing the consequences the war has had for Ukrainian people, Stiller said: “There are seven or eight million people, just within the country, who have been displaced.“It’s just so overwhelming when you see the reality of it.”It was an honour to meet President [*@ZelenskyyUa*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) on [*#WorldRefugeeDay*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/WorldRefugeeDay?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) as part of my visit with UNHCR [*@Refugees*](https://twitter.com/Refugees?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) to stand in solidarity with people forced to flee in Ukraine and worldwide, and bring more attention to the humanitarian situation. [*@Refugees*](https://twitter.com/Refugees?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#WithRefugees*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/WithRefugees?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/zpNpva233j*](https://t.co/zpNpva233j) — Ben Stiller (@BenStiller) [*June 20, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BenStiller/status/1538996580849786881?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

He added: “When you go over there, you see it’s not just the physical effects of the war and the destruction.

“It’s also the trauma and the psychological effects of what happens when you’re forced to fight for your life in a situation that you have nothing to do with.”

Stiller also explained what he learnt from the experience, citing the courageous attitudes of the Ukrainian people he encountered: “They said, ‘For us, we have no choice. This is our country, and they’re trying to obliterate us.’

“It makes you think what you’d do in that situation.

“Standing in solidarity with these people is so important.”

**Load-Date:** August 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ireland may be required to take in well over 20,000 Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X1-9W31-DY4H-K0PV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 2, 2022 Wednesday 7:48 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 1182 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** Micheal Martin said a 'people of Ireland response' would be required.

**Body**

The [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) premier has indicated that the country may be required to take in well over the 20,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** speculated in recent days.

Micheal Martin said it was "hard to be definitive", but that it was possible that country could take in "multiples of 20,000" refugees displaced by the war.

He said a "people of [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) response" would be required.

"It's moved very rapidly.

"I think we are at about 836,000 refugees, according to the [*United Nations*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/united-nations) , that have left Ukraine," Mr Martin said.

"Half of those have gone to Poland.

"We will play our part.

"There was a meeting today of all secretary generals of government departments.

"Tomorrow we will convene a meeting of ministers in key departments to start scenario planning and working out how we will respond to that.

"I think it will be a people of Ireland response as well as a [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) response.

"It will be challenging.

"This is the largest war on the continent of Europe since the Second World War.

"I'm not sure people have yet grasped the enormity of what is happening and what can potentially happen in terms of the repercussions for the continent of Europe.

"There will be a migration impact, there will be an economic impact in terms of inflation.

We've got to be ready as a country in terms of the more general consequences, migration being one

Micheal Martin

"We've got to be ready as a country in terms of the more general consequences, migration being one."

Mr Martin confirmed that the Irish Government was working to secure accommodation for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving in the country.

He also said that the Government could not act alone, as it prepares for the arrival of people fleeing the Russian invasion.

"It will be at a scale and at a level that we will require volunteers, people in civil society, to work with us to help people when they come here," he added.

"Already people in the health and medical world are offering support in terms of trauma.

"There is a whole range of areas that will require society response."

Meanwhile, Leo Varadkar has told the Fine Gael parliamentary party meeting on Wednesday night that the Russian invasion has "changed our world".

The Fine Gael leader said Ukrainians were fighting for their independence, democracy, personal liberties and were an "inspiration to all".

He warned the war could become even more violent and difficult in weeks to come, adding that Ireland has a duty to its European allies.

Party colleagues were told that the Government is considering to expel some Russian diplomats.

Earlier, Mr Martin rejected further calls for the Russian ambassador to Ireland to be expelled.

The Fianna Fail leader refused to bow to pressure from opposition parties in the Dail on Wednesday, as Sinn Fein and Labour pressed the Government to expel Yury Filatov.

Both parties acknowledged there were "valid" reasons for keeping the ambassador in the country, but said they paled in the face of the horrors being perpetrated in Ukraine.

I happen to believe that now is the time for our Government, for you as head of Government, to take the lead on this issue

Mary Lou McDonald

Sinn Fein leader [*Mary Lou McDonald*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mary-lou-mcdonald) , who spoke of the "harrowing scenes emanating from Ukraine", called on Ireland to take the lead in Europe's diplomatic response to the Russian invasion.

"Every diplomatic avenue must be used to end the war.

"All diplomatic leverage must be employed.

"It's clear that the actions of Russia in Ukraine are abhorrent.

"And to that end, I want to ask you about the expulsion of the Russian ambassador to Ireland.

"I happen to believe that now is the time for our Government, for you as head of Government, to take the lead on this issue.

"I invite you as head of the Irish Government to lead again, to lead together with our partners in Europe and to leverage this crucial diplomatic tool.

"It is essential, as shells rain down on Kyiv, as people flee for their lives, that we demonstrate in every way to the Russian Federation that our island means business and state that we will not offer any shelter, any excuse, any cover in any form."

Labour's Alan Kelly questioned the logic of retaining an ambassador accused of being a proven liar.

"We have always shown leadership in this country and the Russian ambassador is a liar.

"He lied to the Irish people on multiple occasions.

What is the point of having diplomatic channels with somebody who lies? You can't trust them

Alan Kelly

"We are in unprecedented territory, with a regime that is acting in an absolutely horrendous way.

"What is the point of having diplomatic channels with somebody who lies?

"You can't trust them.

"If he had said nothing, it would have been better.

"I am asking you formally to withdraw our ambassador from Russia, because I believe we have to do that."

Mr Martin in recent days has stressed the importance of maintaining diplomatic links to Moscow, even in the face of scepticism from within his own party.

On Wednesday, he repeated the importance of keeping a channel to Russia amid the uncertainty of the weeks to come.

He also rejected the suggestion by Sinn Fein that a charge d'affaires could be appointed to keep some diplomatic link to Russia.

"We're less than a week into this horrific war against the Ukrainian people.

"I think President Putin has not achieved the rapid victory over the Ukrainian people that he anticipated.

"It's very clear now that President Putin is moving into a new phase where you're witnessing extreme forms of barbarity, in terms of barbaric attacks on cities, on civilian targets, levelling cities, and it's quite horrific."

Mr Martin said Europe could see a humanitarian crisis of an unparalleled scale.

"We as a country have to now get our heads around that and start preparing in relation to the humanitarian responses that potentially will be required to deal with the scale of migration caused by the war itself.

"I think the Irish people will do the right thing.

"We will not be found wanting in relation to our humanitarian response."

He said diplomatic expulsions were the "easy bit" but it was more important for Ireland to act "in concert" with the EU.

Responding to Sinn Fein, Mr Martin said: "We've expelled diplomats in the past.

"You would not have found favour with that in the past, as you know, and you took a view that it was contrary to military neutrality at a time in the teeth of Russian aggression.

"I would readily acknowledge that when that happens, there is a reciprocal response.

"And you end up with nobody on the ground in Moscow, where we do have Irish citizens."

Meanwhile, members of the Ukrainians In Ireland and Uplift Ireland campaign groups staged a protest on Wednesday outside the European headquarters of Facebook and Google in Dublin.

Layla Wade, campaigner with Uplift, said: "We are supporting the call from the Ukrainians in Ireland group to urge Facebook and Google to remove all Russian state-backed propaganda accounts from their platforms.

"The Kremlin state has been waging an information war for years and allowed their audience on their accounts to grow to such high numbers and we are here to call on social media platforms to stem that from happening."

**Load-Date:** March 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Boris Johnson bows to pressure and expands visa scheme for Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WS-5Y51-JBNF-W24H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 1, 2022 Tuesday 12:49 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:8

**Length:** 731 words

**Byline:** Adam Forrest

**Highlight:** UK could welcome 200,000 people, claims PM, as eligibility widened

**Body**

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.ukfile:///topic/boris-johnson) said Britain would "welcome" a large number of ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) , as he bowed to pressure and expanded the visa criteria to allow more to join family members in the UK as they flee the war zone.

The government has come under pressure from both Tory and Labour MPs for its response to the refugee crisis, but the prime minister insisted the widened access would allow "very considerable numbers" of Ukrainians to seek refuge in the UK.

Mr Johnson claimed more 200,000 people from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) could soon be eligible under the visa route, as the scheme was broadened to include more parents, adult children, grandparents and siblings.

He insisted Britain had "always had a tradition of welcoming people in large numbers" as he was grilled over his refusal to copy the EU by waiving visa rules for refugees fleeing [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's forces.

Mr Johnson told reporters: "We're extending the family [visa] scheme so that considerable numbers would be eligible. We're talking about a couple of hundred thousand, maybe more."

He added: "We're going to have a humanitarian scheme, and then a scheme by which UK companies and citizens can sponsor individual Ukrainians to come to the UK. We're doing exactly what the UNHCR [UN Refugee Agency] is asking us to do."

The prime minister's spokesperson said the 200,000 figure used by Mr Johnson was "indicative only" as it was "impossible to predict" how many would want to come to the UK.

The expansion of the Ukrainian visa scheme announced on Sunday was set to apply only to spouses, the parents of children under 18, as well as children under 18.

But Priti Patel confirmed in the Commons that the definition of relatives would be extended to "parents, grandparents, adult offspring, siblings" under the Ukrainian family visa scheme.

She also said a "humanitarian sponsorship pathway" was being set up for Ukrainians who do not have close family members in the UK, but who can get sponsorship from a firm or individual, saying there would be no limit of the numbers who could apply.

The home secretary told MPs both the family route and sponsorship route would allow Ukrainians to reside in the UK for an initial period of 12 months.

Ms Patel said: "This is a very generous and it is an expansive and unprecedented package. It will mean that the British public and the Ukrainian diaspora can support displaced Ukrainians in the UK."

The home secretary defended her claim that the UK could not copy the EU by dropping visa requirements for refugees fleeing the Russian invasion because of "security advice".

She told MPs: "Russian troops are seeking to infiltrate and merge with Ukrainian forces," adding there are "extremists on the ground" in Ukraine.

Ms Patel also sparked anger by suggesting Labour MPs cannot be trusted to receive security briefings about threats to the UK from the crisis in Ukraine. "I'm very sceptical of how they treat and respect security advice."

Jacqui Smith, former Labour home secretary, later tweeted: "That's an unwarranted slur on the current opposition and unworthy of a home secretary."

Shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper welcomed the changes announced on Tuesday, but questioned Ms Patel over whether more could still be done.

The senior Labour figure added: "Surely she is not expecting to turn their families away? When people are fleeing Russian authoritarianism or war I assume she will not be applying a test based on which bureaucratic box UK residents tick."

Sir Keir Starmer said the government's plans to relax visa rules for Ukrainians still do not go far enough. "A simple route to sanctuary is what we're seeking," the Labour leader told reporters on Tuesday. "I don't think the Home Office and home secretary have gone far enough on this."

Dozens of senior Conservatives had joined Labour in demanding more "decisive" action on refugees, including ex-ministers Jeremy Hunt, Robert Buckland, Greg Clark, Damian Green and Caroline Nokes.

Tory hardliner Sir Edward Leigh raised eyebrows by praising Ms Patel for refusing to drop visa requirements and "throw away the immigration rulebook". He said his Lincolnshire constituents had already "done our bit in terms of migration from eastern Europe".

The UK has also provided an extra £80m in funding for the humanitarian relief effort, taking the total to £220m. No 10 said the extra money would be used on the border of Ukraine to provide assistance to refugees.

**Load-Date:** March 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees at 'acute risk of exploitation by human traffickers', charities warn*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X1-9W31-DY4H-K0N8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 2, 2022 Wednesday 7:18 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:3

**Length:** 761 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Campaigners 'hugely alarmed' people fleeing Russian conflict will fall prey to criminal gangs that are 'waiting to traffic people across Europe and into the hands of exploitative industries'

**Body**

Ukrainian citizens fleeing the conflict in their country are at "acute risk of [*exploitation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/exploitation) " by [*human traffickers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/human-traffickers) , campaigners have warned.

As hundreds of thousands flee the conflict that has taken hold in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) following the Russian invasion, experts say they are "alarmed" that [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) will fall prey to criminal gangs that are "waiting to traffic people across Europe and into the hands of exploitative industries".

More than 660,000 Ukrainians have already crossed the border -a figure expected to soon surpass 1 million - while the EU has said that 7 million people are likely to be displaced as a result of the conflict.

The Independent has set up a petition calling on the UK government to be at the forefront of the international community offering aid and support to those in Ukraine. [*To sign the petition click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) .

The majority of these refugees, who have left their homes and most of their possessions behind, are now in surrounding countries such as Poland, Romania, Hungary, Moldova, and Slovakia.

Social policy charity Care said it predicts a "disturbing spike in cases" in the months to come, warning that criminal gangs are known to have a "foothold" in the neighbouring countries, and will be "waiting in the wings" and "ready to take advantage of the crisis".

Lauren Agnew, human trafficking policy expert at the charity, said the conflict in Ukraine was "hugely alarming" for those working to combat human trafficking, and warned governments across Europe to be "mindful of the added dangers we now face".

"We're dealing with very vulnerable individuals, and human traffickers are going to be seeing this crisis as a business opportunity to traffic people across Europe," she told The Independent.

Ms Agnew explained that in some cases traffickers may offer ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** transport over the border or into other European countries, and later order that they pay vast amounts of money for the journey, forcing them into debt and at the mercy of the gangs.

Ms Agnew called on European governments to "step up efforts" to spot and prevent crime given the situation, and on the UK government to increase its domestic protections for victims of modern slavery, warning that there would likely be an increase in Ukrainian victims in the months to come.

In another indication of the trafficking risks, the Romanian branch of the International Justice Mission (IJM), an NGO that works to combat human trafficking, said it was preparing for "increased vulnerability and risk of trafficking of persons" as a result of the conflict.

In a social media post over the weekend, the organisation wrote: "IJM Romania is watching the tragic situation in the Ukraine carefully. We are aware of the possibility that over time there will be increased vulnerability and risk of trafficking of persons.

"To prepare for that, we have proactively developed messaging on where victims can turn for help in Ukrainian and Romanian. We will be working with local partners to share this information in the coming days."

Kate Roberts, head of policy at charity Focus on Labour Exploitation, said the British government should provide safe routes for everyone seeking safety, including Ukrainians, to get protection in the UK and ensure that people are not driven into exploitation once they arrive.

She said clause 11 in the Home Office's Nationality and Borders Bill, which would penalise refugees who arrive to the UK via unauthorised routes, should be scrapped, warning that it could increase the risk of trafficking.

Clause 11 would see asylum seekers who come to Britain via small boats, by stowing away in trucks or via other irregular routes criminalised and blocked from being granted refugee status in the UK.

They would either be imprisoned or granted a form of temporary status that affords them no access to benefits and no family reunion rights and be regularly re-assessed for removal.

Home Office spokesperson said: "The government is committed to tackling the heinous crime of human trafficking. We will continue to clampdown on those who continue to exploit vulnerable people while providing tailored support for victims to help their recovery.

"We are keeping the situation in Ukraine under review and remain in close contact with the Ukrainian government."

The Independent is also raising money for the people of Ukraine - if you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gofundme.com%2Frefugeeswelcome&data=04%7C01%7CRichard.Booth%40independent.co.uk%7C2a2d4959602a48a7514408d9fbc3eb4d%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637817641168940275%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=ATpA7MHdDll9gTN2YA3M0WDLJ14Hml6HE4NixBieVis%3D&reserved=0) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Fears over unregulated Facebook pages where Ukrainian refugees 'advertise themselves' to find UK hosts*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6522-3JR1-JBNF-W0VH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 21, 2022 Monday 3:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:4

**Length:** 1082 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Concerns current 'matching' system for UK sponsorship scheme is like a 'Tinder for people traffickers'

**Body**

[***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) have started to "advertise" themselves on [*social media*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/social-media) in a bid to find hosts in the UK, prompting concerns that the programme could expose vulnerable people to abuse.

A swathe of unregulated Facebook pages have been set up designed to "match" people who have fled [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and hope to find a temporary home in Britain with UK residents who are willing to house them.

In many cases young women are posting photographs of themselves, sometimes with their children, on the public Facebook groups appealing for an offer of housing from people in the UK, to which any Facebook user can reply.

The government launched the sponsorship scheme on Friday, with the application page stating that Ukrainian nationals and their family members may apply only if they have a "named sponsor".

The scheme will allow Ukrainians with no family links to come to the UK and be hosted by members of the public, who will be paid £350 per month for sharing their homes. More than 150,000 people have so far registered their interest in hosting refugees who have fled Ukraine.

There is no official mechanism or portal by which refugees and prospective hosts can be linked up. When announcing the scheme last week, minister for levelling up Michael Gove said he hoped individuals and community groups would be able to "match" with refugees using social media, adding that charities would help with the process.

The Independent is raising money for the people of Ukraine - if you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

The Independent has discovered at least a dozen Facebook pages that have subsequently been set up designed to enable this matching process, many of which already have thousands of members. They are filled with posts by both prospective hosts advertising their offer of accommodation and ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** appealing for housing.

Jenni Regan, chief executive at iMix, which represents refugee and asylum charities in the UK, said the emergence of the Facebook groups threw up "a lot of issues", describing the approach as "almost like a Tinder for people traffickers".

"Many of the Ukrainians seeking refuge are young women who are already incredibly vulnerable. It feels like protections against sexual exploitation and violence have been completely forgotten, which is terrifying. We know that this has already been a problem for those leaving Ukraine and travelling into neighbouring countries," she said.

Ms Regan said the charity was also seeing potential hosts from the UK get "frustrated" when offers of help are rejected.

She added: "We noted that one user claimed it was like a bidding war with far more supply than demand and with a bias towards people wanting to be hosted in London. We are seeing the goodwill of the British public being eroded by the process.

"There are also several unregulated sites that have popped up over the weekend offering to match people. If people are drawn to these in favour of those backed by charities with experience and knowledge of resettlement, such as the Reset Homes for Ukraine Site, we could soon see the process become commercialised with people paying for a service which is currently free."

Adding that there was also evidence of scammers potentially using the scheme, Ms Regan said: "To apply for the scheme both sides must provide information such as passports and bills. In the wrong hands this data could be gold dust for potential identity theft."

The government has said that any sponsor wishing to house Ukrainians will be subject to [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) checks before any visa is issued, with adults in the house of a sponsor required to complete DBS checks and an enhanced DBS check for families hosting children or vulnerable adults.

But ministers are being urged by charities to work with the third sector to go further and create an "official, central" way of matching people hoping to use the scheme.

Lauren Agnew, trafficking policy expert at CARE (Christian Action Research and Education), said that while it was "heartening" to see the "generous" response from people across the UK keen to play their part in supporting refugees, the potential problems with the approach being taken could "not be ignored".

"The government may not be endorsing hosts seeking out refugees to sponsor on social media, but the current system will nevertheless create an environment for this to happen. A system allowing the public to identify refugees to host presents an opportunity to bad actors seeking to take advantage of them," she said.

"Already, we are seeing unregulated groups and accounts springing up on social media. Human traffickers can masquerade on these sites as genuine individuals wanting to help when, in reality, they are online to 'shop' for their next victims to exploit. How can Ukrainians know groups or individuals presenting on social media are genuine and safe?"

Ms Agnew said it was the government's job to "close those gaps before any harm is done", and called on ministers to "work with expert groups to identify what action is needed".

"It is also incredibly important that the government uses its channels to urge refugees not to interact with groups and private individuals on social media. Instead, they should seek help through official websites affiliated to the government or reputable NGOs," she added.

A spokesperson for the department for levelling up said: "All those offering to house Ukrainians will be subject to Home Office checks before any visa is issued.

"Adults in the house of a sponsor will also be required to complete DBS checks, with an enhanced DBS with barred list check for families hosting children or vulnerable adults. We will keep these checks under review."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page

**Load-Date:** March 21, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Humza Yousaf: Ukrainian refugees to have immediate access to healthcare*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652W-9P01-DY4H-K286-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 25, 2022 Friday 11:23 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 336 words

**Byline:** Katrine Bussey

**Highlight:** The Health Secretary said the move was part of efforts to ensure that refugees received the 'warmest welcome possible' in Scotland.

**Body**

Ukrainians fleeing the war in their homeland will be able to access healthcare and some benefits as soon as they arrive in [*Scotland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scotland).

Health Secretary [*Humza Yousaf*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/humza-yousaf) explained the move was part of efforts to ensure that those fleeing the Russian invasion receive the "warmest welcome possible".

An amendment to current legislation means that refugees from Ukraine will be able to access health care, including maternity care, mental health services and treatment for specific conditions at no charge while in Scotland.

The [*Scottish Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scottish-government) has also stressed this will apply to people from Ukraine who were in Scotland on short term visas when the war began and have had to extend their stay as it is not safe for them to return home.

Further to this, anyone is entitled to free emergency treatment at A&E, regardless of their nationality, residence status or the length of time they have been in the country, with people also able to register with a GP to receive care there free of charge

Emergency legislation has also come into force which will allow those coming to Scotland from Ukraine to meet the residency conditions to Scottish social security benefits.

This means those fleeing the war will be immediately able to claim payments such as the Scottish [*Child*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/child) Payment and Child Disability Payment, if eligible for them.

With millions of people having fled Ukraine in the wake of the Russian invasion, Mr Yousaf, speaking on behalf of the Scottish Government, said: "We are determined to do everything in our power to give displaced people from Ukraine the warmest welcome possible when they arrive and this includes offering healthcare to those who need it.

"We fully recognise that they may have been through very traumatic experiences and could require specialist treatment and care.

"Removing charges for healthcare and providing access to benefits is a practical step in ensuring those who have been forced to flee their homes and country can live safely and comfortably in Scotland for as long as they need to."

**Load-Date:** March 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Jill Biden to meet Ukrainian refugees during border visit*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65CS-XVV1-DY4H-K2F5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 6, 2022 Friday 5:24 AM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1009 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Jill Biden is using her second solo overseas trip to get an up-close look at the Ukrainian refugee crisis

**Body**

For weeks, first lady [*Jill Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jill-biden) has been transfixed by the news coming out of Ukraine, by the bombings and scenes of "parents weeping over their children's broken bodies in the streets," as she said in a recent speech.

Now Biden is using her second solo overseas trip to get an up-close look at the Ukrainian refugee crisis by visiting [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) and [*Slovakia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/slovakia) , where she will spend Mother's Day meeting with displaced families in a small Slovakian village on the border with Ukraine.

Biden, who opens the visit Friday in Romania, told reporters traveling with her Thursday night, "It's so important to the president and to me that the Ukrainian people know that we stand with them." She said earlier in the week she wants the refugees to know "their resilience inspires me."

NATO allies Romania and Slovakia border Ukraine and have taken in some of the millions of mostly women and children who fled after Russia invaded Ukraine in late February, triggering [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) 's largest refugee crisis since World War II.

Biden also will use her four days in Europe to highlight issues she promotes at home, such as support for U.S. service members, education and the welfare of children.

After flying overnight from Washington, Biden was to arrive at Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base in Romania, near the Black Sea, in time to help serve Friday dinner to U.S. service members stationed there. Some of the several thousand U.S. troops that President Joe Biden deployed to eastern Europe in the leadup to the war were sent to the base, which is about 60 miles (100 kilometers) from Romania's border with Ukraine.

The centerpiece of the first lady's trip comes Sunday - Mother's Day - when Biden, a mother of three, meets with displaced Ukrainians who sought refuge across the border in Slovakia.

Biden's daughter, Ashley Biden, had planned to accompany her mother to Europe, but backed out after learning Thursday that she was a close contact of someone who tested positive for COVID-19, said Michael LaRosa, the first lady's spokesperson. Ashley Biden tested negative, LaRosa said.

"I can only imagine the grief families are feeling," Jill Biden said this week. "I know that we might not share a language, but I hope that I can convey, in ways so much greater than words, that their resilience inspires me, that they are not forgotten, and that all Americans stand with them still."

The first lady also will meet during the trip with humanitarian aid workers, educators, government officials and U.S. embassy personnel, the White House said.

Nearly 6 million Ukrainians, mostly women and children, have fled their country since Russia's invasion, according to the U.N. refugee agency. Many have resettled in next-door countries, like Romania and Slovakia, or have gone elsewhere in Europe to try to rebuild their lives.

More than 850,000 Ukrainians have entered Romania since the invasion, while nearly 400,000 have crossed into Slovakia, according to government figures from those countries.

Biden has long displayed an interest in the plight of refugees around the world.

In 2011, when her husband was vice president, she traveled to drought-stricken east Africa to visit with Somali famine refugees at the Dadaab camp in Kenya. In 2017, she visited refugees in Chios, Greece, as part of work by the aid organization Save The Children, on whose board she served.

Some refugee advocates said Biden's trip will send the message that the United States takes seriously its humanitarian commitment to the Ukrainian people.

"Every first lady has a far-reaching platform to raise awareness and this trip will be an important tool for mobilizing additional support for those forced to flee their homeland," said Krish O'Mara Vignarajah, president and CEO of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service and formerly a policy director to first lady Michelle Obama.

Jill Biden's trip will be the latest to the region by a U.S. government representative following recent visits to Kyiv, Ukraine's capital, by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Secretary of State Antony Blinken to meet with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

President Biden visited ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** during a stop in Poland in March. That's the closest he's been to Ukraine. The White House has said there are no current plans for him to visit Kyiv.

After her time with the U.S. service members, the first lady was set to spend Saturday in Bucharest, Romania's capital, being briefed on humanitarian efforts, meeting with Romanian first lady Carmen Iohannis and touring a school where Ukrainian refugee students are enrolled before she departs for Slovakia. Biden is a community college English professor.

On Sunday, she heads to Kosice, Slovakia, to visit a city-operated refugee center and a public school that also hosts Ukrainian refugee students, where she will spend time with Ukrainian and Slovakian mothers and children as they participate in Mother's Day activities. Afterward, she will travel to the Slovakia-Ukraine border crossing in Vysne Nemecke, Slovakia.

The White House declined to comment on whether she will cross the border and enter Ukraine.

She'll also visit a small Greek Catholic chapel in Vysne Nemecke that serves refugees.

Monday brings a meeting with Slovakian President Zuzana Caputova, the country's first female president, before Biden heads back to Washington.

The first lady has shown her support the Ukrainian people in several ways. She wore a sunflower - Ukraine's national flower - on her mask and a dress sleeve, and traveled to a Tennessee hospital to visit with Ukrainian children flown there for cancer treatment.

She had Ukraine's ambassador to the U.S., Oksana Markarova, sit with her during President Biden's State of the Union address in March, and went to the Army's Fort Campbell in Kentucky to visit with the families of U.S soldiers who were deployed to Europe to assist with the Ukraine crisis.

The trip is the first lady's second overseas by herself. She flew to Tokyo last year to represent the United States at the opening of the Olympic Games.

**Load-Date:** May 6, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Immigration minister shuns request to address MPs on response to refugee crisis*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XJ-P2D1-JCS0-D34G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 5, 2022 Saturday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 9

**Length:** 645 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

Britain's immigration minister has refused to give evidence to MPs on the UK's response to the ***Ukraine*** ***refugee crisis***.

Kevin Foster, the minister for immigration and future borders, has declined an invitation from the Home Affairs Committee to answer questions on what Britain is doing to provide support and refuge to people leaving Ukraine following the invasion by Russia.

The committee said that "given the urgency of the situation" it had asked the minister to reconsider.

A Home Office spokesperson later told The Independent Mr Foster "has not refused to attend but asked for a later date given this urgent work" responding to the Ukraine situation.

The department has come under criticism in recent days over its "bespoke humanitarian route" for Ukrainians fleeing the conflict, after it emerged that the scheme excludes swathes of refugees with loved ones in the UK.

Home secretary Priti Patel announced on Tuesday that it was expanding the route to include parents, grandparents, adult children and siblings of British nationals and people settled in the UK, and that a new sponsorship scheme was being established to help people fleeing the Russia invasion.

But many relatives, including partners or cousins of British nationals, as well as close relatives of people in the UK on work or study visas, who are not deemed to be "settled", remain excluded from the scheme.

Shadow immigration minister Yvette Cooper said earlier this week that there remained "significant questions" about "gaps in the system and delays", and that she remained concerned about whether this would deliver the "much needed support and sanctuary in practice".

It also emerged on Wednesday that the helpline set up by the Home Office for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** wishing to join loved ones in Britain under the new visa scheme was being manned by advisers who know nothing about the scheme.

It comes after Mr Foster was criticised for suggesting that ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the Russian invasion could apply for the seasonal worker scheme in order to get into the UK.

Replying to a tweet by Labour's shadow armed forces minister Luke Pollard raising concerns that Ukrainians fleeing the conflict still have to apply for a visa to enter the UK last week, the immigration minister, in a now-deleted tweet, cited the seasonal worker scheme. The suggestion prompted calls for him to apologies - which he has not done.

More than 1 million Ukrainians have already crossed the border, and the EU has said that 7 million people are likely to be displaced as a result of the conflict.

Labour has today called on the government to end "ongoing confusion" over its policy on refugees fleeing President Putin's war by making a "simple emergency visa" available to all Ukrainians that need sanctuary and protection in the UK.

Despite the commitments made by the prime minister to join other countries in providing protection for those who have fled the Russian bombardment in Ukraine, the opposition party warned that the "rhetoric does not match the reality".

Ms Cooper said: "People need a simple and safe route to sanctuary right now. Most want to stay close to home, especially those who have had to leave relatives behind, but the UK must play its part to help people seeking support and safety in our country too.

"Despite government announcements, desperate families are finding that the rhetoric doesn't match the reality. They cannot wait for the Home Secretary's slow and piecemeal approach which just doesn't match the urgency of this crisis. Ukrainians need help right now to reach safety."

A Home Office spokesperson said: "Home Office ministers are busy responding to the situation in Ukraine at this critical time, including helping reunite thousands of families in the UK through the Ukraine family scheme. Minister Foster has not refused to attend but asked for a later date given this urgent work."

**Load-Date:** March 4, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Prague closes the door to more Ukrainian refugees because of overcrowding fears*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65PK-8F21-DY4H-K550-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 16, 2022 Thursday 2:02 PM GMT

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**Section:** WORLD,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:2

**Length:** 793 words

**Byline:** William Nattrass

**Highlight:** Mayor says he cannot allow more Ukrainians into the city because of a ‘duty not to allow the inhabitants of Prague to run out of places in schools or with doctors’

**Body**

A short walk through the streets of [*Prague*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prague) is all it takes to realise the extent of the Czech capital’s help for [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) fleeing war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

In just under four months, the social fabric of this metropolitan city has changed. Ukrainian is now probably the most commonly heard language after Czech, and signs of Ukraine’s struggle are ever-present in yellow-and-blue flags lining city streets and flying from public buildings.

Yet now, Prague is closing to refugees. City authorities have long complained about the concentration of refugees in the capital compared with other parts of the country, and at midnight on Wednesday, the city’s processing centre for new arrivals shut its doors.

Prague mayor Zdenek Hrib said he could not allow the arrival of more Ukrainians because he has a “duty not to allow the inhabitants of Prague to run out of places in schools or with doctors, and to have nowhere to live”.

Hrib claims the capital is hosting four times more refugees per capita than other Czech regions, with its refugee centre handling close to 100,000 refugees since the start of the war. The country has accepted more than 340,000.

Prague, a city of 1.3 million, has been warning about overcrowding for weeks as uncertainty grows about the long-term impacts of the crisis. Education is the biggest worry; some feared a sign of things to come when a school near Prague recently began prioritising places for Ukrainian children over Czechs.

Aneta Lednova, a spokesperson for the Czech Education Ministry, told The Independent that precise numbers of Ukrainian school-age children were impossible to gauge because “the number is constantly changing depending on families’ arrival or departure from the Czech Republic”.

“In the new school year (starting in September), school attendance will be compulsory for all Ukrainian children, and Ukrainian children attending school will have the same rights as Czech children,” she confirmed.

But no one knows how many Ukrainian children will enrol in Czech schools – or how the education system would cope with the sudden addition of tens or even hundreds of thousands of new pupils when the new academic year begins.

The uncertainty compounds a tight squeeze on accommodation that led to the construction of a tent camp in Prague mostly used to house Roma refugees whom the city authorities claim are in many cases not eligible to receive state aid.

The situation isn’t helped by the impossibility of predicting how many refugees will stay in the long term. In late May, interior minister Vít Rakusan tried to calm nerves by claiming 1,000 refugees a day were leaving the Czech Republic to return home to Ukraine.

But speaking to The Independent, Ondrej Kratoska from the Interior Ministry confirmed that the authorities have very little idea about the real number of refugees staying or going.

“A lot of them may be returning home to check on their belongings, to see whether their houses have been destroyed,” he said. “Once they have a visa here, they can move around as they please.”

The ministry’s assessment seems to accurately reflect the reality of the situation in Prague.

A Russian IT professional who opened his home to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** told The Independent that the family who stayed with him have returned to Kyiv as “it seems to be relatively calm there”, but that “they may return” in future.

According to Kratoska, the fluidity of the situation is compounded by the lack of checks at the Czech border resulting from EU free movement. While this allows Ukrainians to act quickly as they anxiously follow the development of the war back home, it also means Prague can’t be sure that it won’t face a meltdown in public services and infrastructure in the coming months.

The capital’s resultant rejection of more refugees moves the Czech Republic into a new phase in dealing with the crisis, with more Ukrainians set to arrive in other towns and villages.

This poses new dangers. Prague is far and away the most welcoming part of the Czech Republic for Ukrainians, and the most supportive of the Ukrainian war effort. The city itself was invaded by Soviet, mostly Russian, troops in 1968 at the time of the Prague Spring, when the Czechs sought a degree of freedom from the dead hand of the USSR during the Cold War.

But, especially in more rural areas, the possible arrival of a wave of refugees tends to be met with grimaces of trepidation rather than sympathy – and many Czechs are already of the opinion that help should not be provided indefinitely to those displaced by the war.

As the west struggles to keep its support for Ukraine at full throttle as a protracted war looms, a swing in public opinion against refugees driven by more conservative sections of the Czech population wouldn’t help the cause.

**Load-Date:** June 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees forced to escape to enemy soil in Russia*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65YT-7SD1-DY4H-K4MP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 20, 2022 Wednesday 7:21 AM GMT

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**Length:** 1103 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Nearly 2 million Ukrainians refugees have ended up in Russia

**Body**

For weeks Natalya Zadoyanova had lost contact with her younger brother Dmitriy, who was trapped in the besieged Ukrainian port city of [*Mariupol*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mariupol).

Russian forces had bombed the orphanage where he worked, and he was huddling with dozens of others in the freezing basement of a building without doors and windows. When she next heard from him, he was in tears.

“I’m alive,” he told her. “I’m in Russia.”

Zadoyanov was facing the next chapter of devastation for the people of Mariupol and other occupied cities: Forcible transfers to Russia, the nation that killed their neighbors and shelled their hometowns almost into oblivion.

Nearly 2 million Ukrainians refugees have been sent to Russia, according to both Ukrainian and Russian officials. Ukraine portrays these transfers as forced journeys to enemy soil, which is considered a war crime. Russia calls them humanitarian evacuations.

An Associated Press investigation has found that while the picture is more nuanced than the Ukrainian government suggests, many refugees are indeed forced into Russia, subjected to abuse, stripped of documents and unclear about their futures — or even locations.

It starts with a poisoned choice: Die in Ukraine or live in Russia. They are taken through a series of what are known as filtration points, where treatment ranges from interrogation and strip searches to being yanked aside and never seen again. [*Refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) described an old woman who died of the cold, her body swollen, and an evacuee beaten so severely that her back was covered in bruises.

Those who “pass” the filtrations are invited to stay and often promised a payment of about 10,000 rubles ($170) that they may or may not get. Sometimes their Ukrainian passports are taken away, and the chance of Russian citizenship is offered instead. And sometimes, they are pressured to sign documents incriminating the Ukrainian government and military.

Those with no money or contacts in Russia — the majority, by most accounts — can only go where they are sent. The [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) verified that Ukrainians have received temporary accommodation in more than two dozen Russian cities and localities.

However, the AP investigation also found signs of dissent within Russia to the government narrative that Ukrainians are being rescued from Nazis. Almost all the refugees the AP interviewed spoke gratefully about Russians who quietly helped them through a clandestine network, retrieving documents, finding shelter, buying train and bus fare, exchanging Ukrainian hryvnia for Russian rubles and even lugging the makeshift baggage that holds the remains of their pre-war lives.

The investigation is the most extensive to date on the transfers, based on interviews with 36 Ukrainians mostly from Mariupol who left for Russia, including 11 still there and others in Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Georgia, Ireland, Germany and Norway. The AP also drew on interviews with Russian underground volunteers, video footage, Russian legal documents and Russian state media.

Exhausted and hungry in the basement in Mariupol, Zadoyanov finally accepted the idea of evacuation. The buses went only to Russia.

Along the way, Russian authorities searched his phone and interrogated him. Zadoyanov was asked what it meant to be baptized, and whether he had sexual feelings toward a boy in the camp.

He and the others were taken to the train station and told their destination would be [*Nizhny Novgorod*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nizhny-novgorod) , 1,300 kilometers (800 miles) from the Ukrainian border. From the train, Zadoyanov called Natalya in Poland. Her panic rose.

Get off the train, she said. Now.

The transfer of hundreds of thousands of people from Ukraine is part of a deliberate, systemic strategy, as laid out in government documents.

Some Ukrainians stay in Russia because while they may be technically free to leave, they have nowhere to go, no money, no documents or no way to cross the distances in a sprawling country twice the size of the United States. Others may have family and strong ties in Russia, or prefer to start anew in a country where they at least speak the language. And some wrongly fear that if they return, Ukraine will prosecute them for going to the enemy.

Lyudmila Bolbad’s family walked out of Mariupol and ended up taking the 9-day train trip to the city of Khabarovsk, near the Chinese border and nearly 10,000 kilometers (6,200 miles) from Ukraine.

Bolbad and her husband found work in a factory. Little else has gone as they’d hoped.

They handed over their Ukrainian passports in exchange for promises of Russian citizenship, only to discover that landlords will not rent to Ukrainians without a valid identity document. The promised payments are slow to come, and they have been stranded with hundreds of others from Mariupol in a rundown hotel with barely edible food. But if she returns, Bolbad thinks Ukraine would see her as a traitor, and she plans to stay in Russia.

“We’re trying to return to a normal life somehow, to encourage ourselves to start our life from scratch,” she said.

For Ukrainians trying to escape, help often comes from an unexpected source: Russians.

On a recent day in Estonia, a Russian tattoo artist accompanied a family from Mariupol across the border to a shelter.

The tattoo artist, who asked that his name be withheld because he still lives in Russia, was the last in a chain of volunteers that stretched 1,900 kilometers (1,100 miles) from Taganrog and Rostov to Narva, the Estonian border town. He boards in St. Petersburg a couple of times a week, going to Finland and sometimes Estonia.

He said Russians who help know each other only through Telegram, nearly all keeping anonymous “because everyone is afraid of some kind of persecution.”

“I can’t stop it,” he said of the war and the deportation of Ukrainians to Russia. “This is what I can do."

In May, volunteers in Penza in Russia shut down their efforts to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** because of anonymous threats. The threats included slashed tires, the Russian symbol Z painted in white on a windshield and graffiti on doors and gates calling them the likes of “Ukro-Nazi” helpers.

For Zadoyanov and many others, the lifeline out of Russia was Russians.

Zadoyanov got off the train to Nizhny Novgorod with the other Ukrainians, and church contacts there gave them shelter and the first steps in finding a way out of Russia into Georgia.

“He was so emotionally damaged,” said his sister, Natalya. “Everyone was.”

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Anastasiia Shvets and Elizaveta Telnaya contributed from Lviv, Ukraine. Oleksandr Stashevskyi contributed from Kyiv, Ukraine. Mstyslav Chernov contributed from Kharkiv, Ukraine. Sophiko Megrelidze contributed from Tblisi, Georgia.

**Load-Date:** July 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine 'humbled' by 150,000 Britons wanting to open homes to Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651D-HK81-JBNF-W320-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 18, 2022 Friday 5:19 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 275 words

**Byline:** Sam Blewett

**Highlight:** Vadym Prystaiko said he's "grateful" to those opening their hearts - and homes - to those fleeing war-torn Ukraine.

**Body**

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) is "humbled" by the more than 150,000 [*Britons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britons) who have expressed an interest in housing refugees fleeing Russia's invasion, the nation's ambassador to the UK said.

Vadym Prystaiko said it has been a "bumpy ride" getting the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) to set up visa-free travel since Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) launched his war, but welcomed the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine scheme as it opened for refugee applications on Friday.

Concerns have been raised about the programme's bureaucracy, safeguarding and resourcing as Ukrainians are matched with British sponsors.

I'm humbled by the sheer number of people who are opening up, sometimes just saying, 'I have a spare room, it's not even a spare house, or flat, it's just a spare room'

Vadym Prystaiko

But the ambassador is cautiously optimistic, saying "this is a temporary solution but I hope it will work" as they work on details including school places and jobs, and is hopeful any issues linking refugees with homes can be "remedied quite soon".

In an interview with the PA news agency, he said: "We're in an initial stage of this work but I'm very grateful that the UK Government and citizens are opening up their hearts, and sometimes homes, offering Ukrainians to stay here.

"I'm humbled by the sheer number of people who are opening up, sometimes just saying, 'I have a spare room, it's not even a spare house, or flat, it's just a spare room.' This is something that's very unusual."

Speaking from the Ukrainian embassy in west London, Mr Prystaiko said that in his discussions with ministers he broadly estimates that between 100,000 and 200,000 Ukrainian will want to temporarily seek refugee in the UK.

**Load-Date:** March 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Orthodox monks welcome Ukrainian refugees to medieval monastery*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6531-P5M1-DY4H-K30G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 26, 2022 Saturday 1:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 484 words

**Byline:** Luiza Ilie

**Highlight:** The 15th-century Romanian monastery has opened its doors to families fleeing the war

**Body**

When Svetlana and her family from the city of Kryvyi Rih in central [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) reached the snow-covered Putna monastery in the rolling hills of northeastern Romania, they had been on the road for four days.

The [*monks*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/monks) living at the remote 15th-century Romanian Orthodox monastery, a pilgrimage site that sits in a valley covered in dense forest, have opened its doors to people like Svetlana who have fled Ukraine to neighbouring countries in their millions since [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) began its invasion on 24 February.

Svetlana left her home city with her daughter Anna, six-year-old grandson Maksim and two other female relatives. Anna's husband and her two siblings stayed behind, helping with humanitarian aid.

"We would go home in a second, our souls are so heavy," Svetlana said. "We are sorry we had to separate from our family. Right now we feel fear and confusion, we don't know what to do next."

As she wept, Father Gherasim Soca quietly embraced and comforted her. Later that day, villagers braved a snow storm to attend a service at which monks prayed for the people of Ukraine inside the large stone church with shimmering icons.

"The majority of people want to reach their final destination, usually somewhere in the west, as soon as possible, and if they can, they choose to spend the night near the border towns," said Father Gherasim.

"Putna is a little more remote, but for those who are not in a rush, they are not crowded here, each family have their own room. I see them go to church and praying, getting comfort. It helps a lot."

More than 412,000 Ukrainians have fled to Romania, where thousands of volunteers, churches, non-governmental organisations and government agencies are providing food, shelter, clothes and transportation.

In northeast Romania, the Suceava and Radauti Orthodox archdiocese has offered hundreds of beds in monasteries as well as parish houses. They also have a permanent presence at the Siret border and adjacent train station including priests and monks who speak Ukrainian or Russian, offering food and help.

"A large part of Ukrainians are going to relatives who work abroad," said Father Alexandru Flavian Sava, the archdiocese's spokesman. "To them, it is more comforting to move on than stop so close to the border and the violence beyond."

Father Gherasim said roughly 100 people, mostly women and children, have so far taken shelter at Putna.

Among them was a couple who came with their baby from Ivano-Frankivsk. The father used his dual Romanian passport to leave, as Ukrainian men of conscription age are not allowed to.

"We have a little girl. We left because we are afraid for us and her," said the father, who wished to remain anonymous. He said they came to stay at Putna before continuing further west because they had visited before.

"We're afraid because we don't know how it will end."

[*Photography*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/photography) by Clodagh Kilcoyne, Reuters

**Load-Date:** March 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UK to allow members of public to house Ukrainian refugees fleeing Russian invasion*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YW-7B01-JBNF-W51D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 11, 2022 Friday 7:53 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:4

**Length:** 755 words

**Byline:** Ashley Cowburn

**Highlight:** Michael Gove to set out on Monday details of new sponsorship route to UK

**Body**

The government will ask the British public to open their homes to Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion [*amid intense criticism*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-visa-home-office-uk-b2032946.html) of its response to the refugee crisis.

Levelling up secretary, [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) , is expected to set out on Monday details of the new "sponsored" route to allow Ukrainians without family links to the UK to come to the country.

The scheme was announced last week by Priti Patel, the home secretary, but details have been unclear amid reports of "different views" between Whitehall departments over the exact nature of the programme.

According to the Daily Telegraph, a hotline and webpage will be made available where individuals, charities, businesses and community groups will be able to offer rooms to those escaping the conflict.

It was added Ukrainians using this route to Britain would be granted permission to stay in the UK for an initial 12 months, with the ability to work, claim benefits and free healthcare.

Those offering housing would have to agree to take the refugees for a minimum period - potentially six months - and demonstrate that they meet appropriate standards, the report said.

According to Western officials, the number of people fleeing the Russian invasion - already around 2.5 million - [*could reach 4 million within days*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-refugees-russia-unhcr-uk-b2032978.html) as the Kremlin continues to wage war.

While many have fled to neighbouring countries such as Poland, Hungary and Moldova, the Ukrainian ambassador to the UK has estimated tens of thousands of people escaping the conflict may come to Britain.

After days of criticism over the government's handling of the situation, including the bureaucracy of the current visa routes and a lack of preparation despite weeks of warnings over a possible invasion, [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) insisted more details would be forthcoming next week.

He told Sky News: "On Monday, you'll get from the levelling up secretary, you'll get the programme that will allow people to come in, so (if) people want to welcome (refugees) into their own homes, they can do so."

Speaking about the sponsorship scheme, the technology minister Chris Philp also added on Friday: "We're going to be making announcements in the very near future about a scheme for UK local authorities, and indeed UK families, to welcome ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, we've announced that principle and the details of how that scheme works will be laid out in the very near future."

The move comes after Ms Patel was urged to do more to make it easier for those coming to the UK through the existing family route and yesterday announced in a U-turn that [*from Tuesday people will be able to apply online for a visa and will no longer have to go to a processing centre to give their biometrics.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-visa-home-office-uk-b2032946.html)

But [*experts have warned there are still "major gaps"*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-visa-home-office-uk-b2032946.html) in the scheme and refugees would still have to go through a "chaotic and frustrating" online process.

It also not clear how many of the 2.5 million Ukrainians to have fled the conflict so far have access to a passport.

The British Red Cross said the quickest way of fixing the problem would be to remove the requirement for a visa - a move backed by the Ukrainian ambassador in London - while the Refugee Council said Ms Patel's announcement "does not go anywhere near far enough".

A No 10 spokesperson told reporters on Friday: "We will set out details of the humanitarian sponsorship scheme soon... that will allow those Brits who can and want to, help and support Ukrainians to do so.

"The Department for Levelling Up are working incredibly closely with the Home Office to make sure we can have up and running and soon as possible.

"We want to make sure we can facilitate those Brits who kindly want to host Ukrainians, as well as businesses and charities to be able to sponsor people to come to the UK. Both departments are working tirelessly to do that".

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015.

Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Former PM David Cameron driving to Poland with aid delivery for Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651F-1FT1-JBNF-W1KG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 18, 2022 Friday 8:29 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 673 words

**Byline:** Emily Atkinson

**Highlight:** Former prime minister applauds Britons for 'stepping up to help our neighbours in hour of need'

**Body**

[*David Cameron*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/david-cameron) has set off driving to Poland in a small lorry full of supplies to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the Russian invasion.

Sharing a photo of himself at the wheel, the former prime minister announced his trip and applauded the "typically phenomenal" generosity of the British people in gathering donations for the millions fleeing the conflict in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Mr Cameron said he and a group of volunteers from the Chippy Larder, a food project in his local town of Chipping Norton, West Oxfordshire, had put out a call for donations in the area.

The team managed to amass enough supplies to fill the small lorry, which is now packed with sanitary products, clothing and medical supplies and is en route to Poland.

I'm currently driving to Poland with two Chippy Larder colleagues to make our delivery to the Red Cross. It's going to be a long drive, but I'll keep you updated along the way. [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine%EF%B8%8F?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/T0ORCT4Eek*](https://t.co/T0ORCT4Eek) - David Cameron (@David\_Cameron) [*March 18, 2022*](https://twitter.com/David_Cameron/status/1504871407607500803?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Mr Cameron said: "For the last two years I've been volunteering each week at the Chippy Larder, a food project in my local town, which helps low-income families with surplus food from supermarkets (and cuts food waste at the same time)."In the last fortnight we've appealed for the things that refugees from Ukraine need as they arrive in Poland. The response has been amazing.... into this -to fill a small lorry with everything from nappies to sanitary products, warm clothes to first aid kits. [*pic.twitter.com/Ql0b2MzuBE*](https://t.co/Ql0b2MzuBE) - David Cameron (@David\_Cameron) [*March 18, 2022*](https://twitter.com/David_Cameron/status/1504871401202847766?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

"The generosity of the community in West Oxfordshire -and of the British people more generally -has been typically phenomenal, stepping up to help our neighbours in their hour of need.

"I'm currently driving to Poland with two Chippy Larder colleagues to make our delivery to the Red Cross. It's going to be a long drive, but I'll keep you updated along the way."

Similar missions have been launched by Britons up and down the country hoping to do their bit to ease the suffering of those fleeing Ukraine.

Yesterday, Sarah, Duchess of York spoke to reporters in Warsaw after organising a convoy of lorries to deliver donated goods to support refugees.

She said the impact of the Russian invasion on families was "unbearable to see" and said she wanted to do her "bit" in supporting the arrival of refugees into Poland.

She said: "This conflict is absolutely heartbreaking to watch. It is unbearable to see families being separated and civilians being caught up in the bloodshed.

"I have always believed the smile of a child is the most important thing in the world, so to see so many children caught up in this crisis is particularly affecting."

She added: "So far we have organised for three articulated lorries with supplies designed to help refugees from Ukraine in Poland. These include clothes for women, children, nappies, hand sanitisers, toiletries, torches, and non-perishable food like porridge oats.

"All of these items have been provided by kind-hearted donors in the UK who I can't thank enough.

"I think those of us in countries further away have a duty to help the Polish people respond to this crisis. Two of our lorries have gone to Rudy and Czeladz, and the third one will go to the Silesia region."

It comes after Mr Cameron called on the government to "get back" to dedicating 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI) to overseas aid, after it was cut to 0.5 per cent last year.

He said the Cabinet should have a dedicated aid minister, who would be "100 per cent dedicated" to the role.

Mr Cameron told Channel 4 News: "Let's do more on humanitarian aid. We achieved 0.7% of GDP in our aid payments. I'm sad we've got away from that. I hope we can get back there.

"Let's -with the EU -lead the donor conference, lead the aid effort.

"Let's have a dedicated aid minister in the Cabinet doing development. The foreign office ministers do a great job but it'd be good to have someone who's 100 per cent dedicated to humanitarian aid and development."

**Load-Date:** March 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Europe welcomes Ukrainian refugees - others, not so much*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WH-J6B1-JBNF-W429-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 28, 2022 Monday 8:24 AM GMT

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**Length:** 1257 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** From "Nobody comes in" to "Everybody gets in."

**Body**

They file into neighboring countries by the hundreds of thousands - refugees from Ukraine clutching children in one arm, belongings in the other. And they're being heartily welcomed, by leaders of countries like [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) , Bulgaria, Moldova and Romania.

But while the hospitality has been applauded, it has also highlighted stark differences in treatment given to migrants and refugees from the Middle East and [*Africa*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/africa) , particularly [*Syrians*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/syrians) who came in 2015. Some of the language from these leaders has been disturbing to them, and deeply hurtful.

"These are not the refugees we are used to... these people are Europeans," Bulgarian President Rumen Radev told journalists earlier this week, of the Ukrainians. "These people are intelligent, they are educated people. ... This is not the refugee wave we have been used to, people we were not sure about their identity, people with unclear pasts, who could have been even terrorists..."

"In other words," he added, "there is not a single European country now which is afraid of the current wave of refugees."

Syrian journalist Okba Mohammad says that statement "mixes racism and Islamophobia."

Mohammad fled his hometown of Daraa in 2018. He now lives in Spain, and with other Syrian refugees founded the first bilingual magazine in Arabic and Spanish. He said he wasn't surprised by the remarks from Radev and others.

Mohammad described a sense of déjà vu as he followed events in Ukraine. Like thousands of Ukrainians, he also had to shelter underground to protect himself from Russian bombs. He also struggled to board an overcrowded bus to flee his town. He also was separated from his family at the border.

"A refugee is a refugee, whether European, African or Asian," Mohammad said.

When it comes to Ukraine, the change in tone of some of Europe's most extreme anti-migration leaders has been striking - from "We aren't going to let anyone in" to "We're letting everyone in."

Those comments were made only three months apart by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban. In the first, in December, he was addressing migrants and refugees from the Middle East and Africa seeking to enter Europe via Hungary. In the second, this week, he was addressing people from Ukraine.

And it's not just politicians. Some journalists are also being criticized for how they are reporting on and describing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. "These are prosperous, middle-class people," an Al Jazeera English television presenter said. "These are not obviously refugees trying to get away from areas in the Middles East... in North Africa. They look like any European family that you would live next door to."

The channel issued an apology saying the comments were insensitive and irresponsible.

When over a million people crossed into Europe in 2015, support for refugees fleeing wars in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan was much greater. Of course, there were also moments of hostility - such as when a Hungarian camerawoman was filmed kicking and possibly tripping migrants along the country's border with Serbia.

Still, back then, Germany's chancellor, Angela Merkel, famously said "Wir schaffen das" or "We can do it," and the Swedish prime minister urged citizens to "open your hearts" to refugees.

Volunteers gathered on Greek beaches to rescue exhausted families crossing on flimsy boats from Turkey. In Germany, they were greeted with applause at train and bus stations.

But the warm welcome soon ended after EU nations disagreed over how to share responsibility, with the main pushback coming from Central and Eastern European countries like Hungary and Poland. One by one, governments across Europe toughened migration and asylum policies, doubling down on border surveillance, earning the nickname of "Fortress Europe."

Just last week, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees denounced the increasing "violence and serious human rights violations" across European borders, specifically pointing the finger at Greece.

And last year hundreds of people, mainly from Iraq and Syria but also from Africa, were left stranded in a no man's land between Poland and Belarus as the EU accused Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko of luring thousands of foreigners to its borders in retaliation for sanctions. At the time, Poland blocked access to aid groups and journalists. More than 15 people died in the cold.

Meanwhile, in the Mediterranean, the European Union has been heavily criticized for funding Libya to intercept migrants trying to reach its shores, helping to return them to abusive - and often deadly - detention centers.

"There is no way to avoid questions around the deeply embedded racism of European migration policies when we see how different the reactions of national governments and EU elites are to the people trying to reach Europe," Lena Karamanidou, an independent migration and asylum researcher in Greece, wrote on Twitter.

Jeff Crisp, a former head of policy, development and evaluation at UNHCR, agreed that race and religion influenced treatment of refugees. Like many, he was struck by the double standard.

"Countries that had been really negative on the refugee issue and have made it very difficult for the EU to develop coherent refugee policy over the last decade, suddenly come forward with a much more positive response," Crisp noted.

Much of Orban's opposition to migration is based on his belief that to "preserve cultural homogeneity and ethnic homogeneity," Hungary should not accept refugees from different cultures and different religions.

Members of Poland's conservative nationalist ruling party have also consistently echoed Orban's thinking on migration to protect Poland's identity as a Christian nation and guarantee its security, they say, arguing that large Muslim populations could raise the risk of terror threats.

But none of these arguments has been applied to their Ukrainian neighbors, with whom they share historical and cultural ties. Parts of Ukraine today were once also parts of Poland and Hungary. Over 1 million Ukrainians live and work in Poland and hundreds of thousands more are scattered across Europe. Some 150,000 ethnic Hungarians also live in Western Ukraine, many of whom have Hungarian passports.

"It is not completely unnatural for people to feel more comfortable with people who come from nearby, who speak the (similar) language or have a (similar) culture," Crisp said.

But as more and more people scrambled to flee as Russia advanced, several reports emerged of non-white residents of Ukraine, including Nigerians, Indians and Lebanese, getting stuck at the border with Poland.

Videos shared on social media posted under the hashtag #AfricansinUkraine allegedly showed African students being held back from boarding trains out of Ukraine - to make space for Ukrainians.

In Poland, Ruchir Kataria, an Indian volunteer, told the Associated Press on Sunday that his compatriots were stuck on the Ukrainian side of the border crossing leading into Medyka, Poland. They were told to go to Romania hundreds of kilometers away, he said, after they had already made long journeys on foot to the border, not eating for three days.

Another group of Indian citizens who managed to cross into Poland were being denied a place to stay in shelters set up by Polish authorities and charities, according to Kataria's wife, Magdalena Barcik, who is working with him to help those fleeing.

Barcik said the Indian group was told that the help was reserved for Ukrainians.

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Vanessa Gera in Warsaw, Poland, and Justin Spike in Budapest, Hungary, contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** February 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Charles tells Ukrainian refugees ‘I’m praying for you’ during state visit to Germany*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67WT-6001-DY4H-K02P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 30, 2023 Thursday 3:02 PM GMT

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**Section:** ROYAL FAMILY,LIFESTYLE; Version:2

**Length:** 458 words

**Byline:** Tony Jones

**Highlight:** Charles met families who escaped to Germany

**Body**

[*The King*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/the-king) has told Ukrainians “I’m praying for you” after condemning the “unimaginable suffering” caused by President Vladimir Putin’s invasion of their homeland.

[*Charles*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/charles) met families who escaped to [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) after he praised the nation’s “courageous, important and appreciated” decision to send “significant” military support to Ukraine in a historic address to the Bundestag.

At Berlin’s old Tegel Airport the King met recently arrived Ukrainians, a few of more than a million who have sought refuge in the country, and in a lighter moment played table football with some of the group.

On several occasions Charles clasped his hands together and told refugees “I’m praying for you”.

The King made history by delivering the first speech by a British monarch during a session of the Bundestag.

He told the packed chamber: “The unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has inflicted the most unimaginable suffering on so many innocent people.

“Countless lives have been destroyed; freedom and human dignity have been trampled in the most brutal way. The security of Europe has been threatened, together with our democratic values.

“The world has watched in horror – but we have not stood by. Even as we abhor the appalling scenes of destruction, we can take heart from our unity – in defence of Ukraine, of peace and freedom.

“Germany and the United Kingdom have shown vital leadership. As Europe’s two largest donors to Ukraine, we have responded with taking decisions which might previously have seemed unimaginable. Germany’s decision to send such significant military support to Ukraine is remarkably courageous, important and appreciated.”

Charles was given a tour of the Ukraine Arrival Centre by German President [*Frank-Walter Steinmeier*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/frank-walter-steinmeier) and stopping to speak to families registering after just arriving, asked: “Was it very difficult to get out of Ukraine? Are you pleased to be here?”

Charles, who is midway through a state visit to Germany with the [*Queen Consort*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/queen-consort) , took up the offer of a game of table football in the refugee centre’s games room and joked: “I remember trying this when I was younger.”

But when he conceded a goal, he replied: “Amazing, two hands you are the experts.”

Speaking afterwards through a translator Olena Ochkiviska, 40, said: “I told him everyone was caring after us and they are working on the negatives.

“He said that he was praying for us all. I’m the luckiest lady in the world.”

Kleopatra Tummler, operations manager of the refugee centre, who also worked 15 years as Take That’s tour manager, said afterwards: “He really showed interest in everyone’s stories.

“He learned that some said there were not enough cellars in Ukraine for people to hide.

“There was a family who had just arrived and registered here who he stopped to talk to.”

**Load-Date:** March 30, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Hundreds of pets have made Ireland their home with Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:658D-73M1-JBNF-W394-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 20, 2022 Wednesday 9:36 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 336 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** Around 600 pets with 485 owners have travelled to the country since the war began.

**Body**

More than 600 pets have been brought to the Republic of [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) since the Russian invasion of Ukraine began.

With the vast majority being cats and dogs, the pets and their 485 owners have made Ireland their new home.

The [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) confirmed the figures on Wednesday, with Agriculture Minister Charlie McConalogue promising Ireland will continue to operate an open-door policy for Ukrainians and their pets.

According to the figures, 333 dogs and 285 cats have travelled to Ireland with their owners from Ukraine, in addition to a number of smaller household pets.

Ireland has taken in just under 25,000 refugees so far from the war-torn country.

The [*Department of Agriculture*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/department-agriculture) is responsible for processing the arrival of pets into Ireland and ensuring all health checks are adhered to.

Mr McConalogue said: "Ireland has always shown itself to be a kind, caring and compassionate country. Our first instinct is to help people who need it and the way in which we have opened our doors to the people of Ukraine shows just how much of a considerate nation we are."

All pets arriving in Ireland undergo a veterinary assessment.

Microchipping, tapeworm treatment and rabies vaccinations are carried out too, if necessary.

Department officials are asking anyone with a pet to notify the Department of Agriculture in advance and to bring as much paperwork as possible on the pet.

A period of quarantine is required, which the department confirmed can take place wherever the owner is staying.

Information on managing this is provided in Ukrainian.

"We recognised quickly the need to ensure that people can move to Ireland and set up a new life with as little stress as possible," the Donegal TD said.

"That is why we have taken a leadership role in allowing those arriving here to bring their pets once they follow a few simple steps to reduce the risk of any disease coming into Ireland.

"[*Pets*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/pets) play a huge role in the lives of so many people.

"They're friends and companions and I was keen to ensure pets could travel with their owners."

**Load-Date:** April 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Harry Dunn spokesman signs up to take in Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650S-8MP1-JBNF-W305-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 15, 2022 Tuesday 3:20 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 335 words

**Byline:** Josh Payne

**Highlight:** Radd Seiger said he had thought about travelling to Ukraine or Poland to offer his support.

**Body**

The spokesman for the parents of teenage motorcyclist [*Harry Dunn*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/harry-dunn) has said his family will "take in as many people as we can" after signing up to help people fleeing the war in Ukraine.

Radd Seiger, whose grandmother was born in the country's capital, [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) , said he will be contacting refugee charities to open up his home in south [*Northamptonshire*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/northamptonshire) to a family.

He said: "I've been trying to think of ways over the last few weeks of how I can personally help.

"I've thought about travelling to [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) or Ukraine to help but it seems the best way I can help is to take in a Ukrainian family to offer them some respite from the trauma they have been suffering.

"We'll take in as many people as we possibly can."

I feel compelled to help

Radd Seiger

Mr Seiger, a retired lawyer, has spent the last two-and-a-half years representing the family of Mr Dunn, who was killed when his motorbike crashed into a car outside US military base RAF Croughton on October 27 2019.

The driver, American [*Anne Sacoolas*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/anne-sacoolas) , 44, had diplomatic immunity asserted on her behalf following the crash and was able to leave the country, sparking an international controversy.

Asked about his personal ties to Ukraine, Mr Seiger told the PA news agency: "My grandmother was born in Kyiv and left, as so many millions did in those days, to the United States in search of a better life.

"I inevitably feel close to these people and I can't just sit here and watch them suffer.

"I wouldn't say it's the reason I'm doing this, but obviously I feel compelled to help."

People should do the right thing and welcome them in with open arms

Radd Seiger

Giving a message to anyone thinking of taking in a Ukrainian family, Mr Seiger added: "I appreciate that many people are not in a position to do so, but I would encourage anyone who is in a position to do so to take that leap of faith.

"There's going to be an exodus and it will only increase as time goes on.

"We can't turn a blind eye to that. People should do the right thing and welcome them in with open arms."

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*University study will be available to Ukrainian refugees, says minister*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650J-G551-JBNF-W0M7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 4:43 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 394 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** Higher Education Minister Simon Harris also confirmed that Irish students who fled from Ukraine will be able to continue their studies in Ireland.

**Body**

The [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) has pledged to ensure that Ukrainians fleeing war can study at [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) universities.

[*Higher Education*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/higher-education) Minister Simon Harris also confirmed that Irish students who fled from Ukraine will be able to continue their studies in [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) , after places were made available by universities.

The majority of those students were studying medicine or dentistry.

Mr Harris met with the Irish Universities Association (IUA) on Monday to discuss the crisis in Ukraine and the response of the Irish third-level sector.

It comes as Ireland prepares to accept potentially tens of thousands of refugees from the war-torn country.

Excellent meeting with [*@IUAofficial*](https://twitter.com/IUAofficial?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) to discuss:\*How we ensure Irish students returning from Ukraine continue their studies in Ireland\* How we welcome students from Ukraine into our universities & support themRead more here: [*https://t.co/jSQKB0CScP*](https://t.co/jSQKB0CScP) - Simon Harris TD (@SimonHarrisTD) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/SimonHarrisTD/status/1503398586565988352?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Mr Harris said one of the most pressing issues will be English language support.

Education officials met Solas and Education and Training Boards Ireland on Monday to discuss how to meet the English language needs of adults and children from Ukraine.

"This is crucial to ensuring people have the ability to understand the information being presented to them, and to help them embed in Irish society," Mr Harris said.

"We will also need to provide employment opportunities for people and offer people the chance to engage in further education.

He said that fitting Irish students back into courses in Ireland was an "immediate priority".

"My department has contacted them all and they are deeply traumatised by what has unfolded. We will work to extend supports and care to them.

"The IUA universities have confirmed they will provide the places necessary and we look forward to working with them on that.

"We will also work collectively to ensure Ukrainian people can access higher education here too."

On Sunday, the [*Taoiseach*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/taoiseach) said that Ireland's humanitarian response trumps security checks on arriving Ukrainians.

Micheal Martin said the state has so far accepted 5,500 people fleeing the Russian invasion and may take in more than 100,000.

He said Ireland's priority is the humanitarian response to what he termed "the worst displacement of people since World War Two".

"Our primary impulse is to assist those fleeing war," he said.

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Michael Gove wants to use oligarchs' mansions to house Ukrainian refugees - but admits 'high legal bar'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6509-TTG1-JBNF-W540-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 13, 2022 Sunday 12:38 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 566 words

**Byline:** Adam Forrest

**Highlight:** 'We're not talking about permanent confiscation', says minister

**Body**

Cabinet minister [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) said the government wants to "explore an option" of using sanctioned oligarchs' mansion homes in Britain to house [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

However, the levelling up minister conceded there would be a "high legal bar to cross" in using frozen assets - and suggested it could only house refugees temporarily.

Asked about reports in the Daily Mail that he wants to "seize" mansions and use them to accommodate people fleeing the war, Mr Gove told the BBC: "There's quite a high legal bar to cross and we're not talking about permanent confiscation."

He told the BBC's Sunday Morning programme: "I want to explore an option which would allow us to use the homes and properties of sanctioned individuals - as long as they are sanctioned - for humanitarian and other purposes."

Mr Gove added: "We are saying: 'You're sanctioned, you're supporting Putin, this home is here, you have no right to use or profit from it - and more than that, while you are not using or profiting from it, if we can use it in order to help others, let's do that'."

When challenged by host Sophie Raworth that oligarchs can continue to live in properties that have been frozen under sanctions - which only prevent assets from being sold - Mr Gove said: "We've moved as rapidly as we possibly can."

The housing minister added: "If we can use those assets for as long as someone is sanctioned, then we should."

Mr Gove's desire to use frozen property assets is reportedly being blocked by officials at the Treasury and the Foreign Office who believe it is "not legally workable".

Ministers have understood to have expressed concerns that properties cannot be seized under current sanctions legislation.

The government has imposed sanctions on 18 Putin-linked oligarchs - as well as 386 members of the Russian parliament. Foreign secretary [*Liz Truss*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liz-truss) has said she has a long "hit list" of Russians as part of a "rolling programme" of sanctions.

Mr Gove also suggested he was personally considering offer a home to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, as he set out details of a government sponsorship route, allowing British citizens and community groups to offer up rooms and receive a "thank you" payment of £350 per month.

Asked if he would take someone fleeing the Russian forces, the cabinet minister told the BBC: "Yes."

He explained: "I'm exploring what I can do, I know that there are others who have. Without going into my personal circumstances, there are a couple of things I need to sort out - but yes."

Mr Gove said there are potentially "hundreds of thousands of people" in the UK willing to take Ukrainians into their homes - but had earlier conceded that he expected the route would only see "tens of thousands" welcomed in.

The housing minister also revealed that local authorities would receive £10,000 for each Ukrainian refugee it sponsors and provides support.

But government has been criticised for insisting that British sponsors go through online paperwork and security checks on behalf of a particular, "named" refugee.

Mr Gove said charities would help in the "matching process", and said the government believed individuals and community groups would use social media to connect and fill out online paperwork together.

The Refugee Council accused the government of putting too many "bureaucratic hurdles" in the way - and said "it will inevitably be restricted to those who are known to people in the UK".

**Load-Date:** March 13, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: At least Matt Hancock's finally got those Ukrainian refugees he wanted*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65CM-YTM1-JBNF-W4KR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 5, 2022 Thursday 4:51 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:2

**Length:** 724 words

**Byline:** Tom Peck

**Highlight:** Somehow the former health secretary has managed to find himself among the lucky ones whose application to host a Ukrainian family has somehow made it through the Home Office's systems

**Body**

Fans of [*Matt Hancock*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/matt-hancock) , of which there may theoretically be some, were left disappointed two months ago when the big man's big comeback, via a business podcast hosted by the newest cast member on Dragons' Den, was overshadowed by Vladimir Putin's suspiciously timed invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

But, on the vanishingly small off-chance these fans exist, they needn't have worried. Their hero would never be one to not turn a crisis into an opportunity (which is the sort of thing people say on business podcasts, when they're not instead having to talk about snogging one of their staff on CCTV), and he has now managed to turn the war in Ukraine to his advantage.

It is not entirely clear whether a single fleeing Ukrainian had made it to the Polish border before Matt Hancock began writing a seemingly never ending succession of newspaper articles about his desperation to host a Ukrainian family.

On one such occasion, I may myself have written an article on the subject, in which I may have asked the question, in the headline, as to whether these people had not already suffered enough. And on that occasion, I may then also have been contacted by Matt Hancock's "team", who felt it all to be very unfair, that he was "doing a decent thing" and that he was damned if he did, and damned if he didn't.

Politeness appears to have prevented me from pointing out that one option worth considering would be simply to apply to host the family in question without any accompanying newspaper articles or TV appearances, thus rendering him exactly as damned and undamned as the other 500,000 or so people in the country who had managed to do just that.

Still, never mind. Because here we are, just a few weeks later, and somehow Matt Hancock has managed to find himself among the lucky ones whose application to host a Ukrainian family has somehow made it through the Home Office's systems. And readers of this week's Spectator magazine are even luckier, gifted as they have been with yet another full page article, all about life in the Hancock household which now has fully seven ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and their four dogs living in it.

Team Hancock can have no complaints about the headline this time. "It takes courage to be vulnerable," it states. The readers, on the other hand, may not be disappointed but possibly bemused when they discover, roughly three-fifths of the way through, that the courage and vulnerability in question refers not to the courage required to run for your life in the middle of relentless Russian shelling, but rather the courage of Matt Hancock, to travel to the Royal Palace in Stockholm and give a talk alongside various princesses from various countries.

(The subject of said talk was Hancock's own dyslexia, a noble topic on which he now finds time to campaign, and with considerable success. He has, he said, managed to build support "across the spectrum" including from the current education secretary, 54-year-old [*Nadhim Zahawi*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nadhim-zahawi) , the former CEO of YouGov and owner of a personal property empire thought to be worth north of £100m. "One day he'll go far," notes Matt.)

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment, sign up to our free weekly Voices Dispatches newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

Look, none of this, per se, is Matt Hancock's fault. It's not his fault he was the last nice guy standing when politics went to the dark side. It's not his fault that his relentless optimism and even more relentless relaunches have come to resemble the attempts of Rob Brydon's divorced cab driver character, Keith, from the outstanding sitcom Marion & Geoff, who will only ever look on the bright side of everything as his life falls apart around him.

In one particular scene, Keith produces his collection of audio cassettes that he's recorded himself, of solo trips to Chessington and Longleat Safari Park, to post to his children on the basis that they'd probably like to go there. "In this age of digital technology," he says, "it's almost like I'm on a computer game with them or something. I'm like a virtual dad, and with virtual dad, they can switch me off if they want to."

And he's right, they can. But when it comes to Matt Hancock, the British public appear to be finding it much more difficult, despite having made their feelings on the subject more than abundantly clear.

**Load-Date:** May 5, 2022

**End of Document**



[*GCSE student swam Channel during exams to raise money for Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:667G-VG21-JBNF-W06W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 25, 2022 Thursday 11:46 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 334 words

**Byline:** Ted Hennessey

**Highlight:** Rose Owens, 15, a year 11 pupil at Roedean School, near Brighton, Sussex, got one 8 and the rest 9s despite training for the swim during her exams.

**Body**

A GCSE student who swam the [*Channel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/channel) between exam papers to raise money for refugee children from Ukraine has achieved top grades in her results.

Rose Owens, 15, a year 11 pupil at Roedean School near [*Brighton*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brighton) , East [*Sussex*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sussex) , got one grade 8 and the rest 9s despite training for the swim during her studies.

At 11pm on June 15, just hours after her geography exam, she set off from Dover as part of a six-girl charity relay team, which included fellow pupils, arriving in Cap Gris-Nez, northern [*France*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/france) , 13 hours and 13 minutes later.

The following week she had a chemistry paper to sit, for which she achieved a grade 9.

Rose told the PA news agency: “It was definitely tough, it was so cold in there and there were loads of jellyfish, big swarms of them that I had to swim through.

“Because it was so cold I didn’t really feel my body aching until the next day, when I was so tired.

“We trained for months every Monday and Friday at 6.30am before school and at weekends so I was able to revise for my [*GCSEs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gcses) in the evenings, but I’m still relieved that it’s all over even though it was an amazing experience.”

Rose is staying on at the school to study double maths, physics and chemistry, with teachers encouraging her to do another swim in two years.

The £7,000 raised by the sponsored swim will go towards supporting a group of Ukrainian refugee pupils who are set to start at Roedean in September.

Rose said: “We originally wanted to do it just to test ourselves, but after the war in Ukraine we decided to try and raise money for bursaries so refugees can come to our school.”

Headmaster Oliver Blond said: “The fact that two members of this year group swam in the cross-Channel relay in the middle of their exams is an example of how rounded Roedean students are, and there are also very many examples of exceptional commitment to sport, dance, drama, art, music and community activities across this year group.

“They have really shown that it is possible to contribute widely while achieving their aspirations.”

**Load-Date:** August 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[*With European countries hungry for workers, more Ukrainians are choosing Germany over Poland*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6956-BGG1-DY4H-K0M7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

September 12, 2023 Tuesday 2:42 PM GMT

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**Length:** 549 words

**Byline:** Vanessa Gera

**Highlight:** A report says Poland is losing large numbers of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** from its workforce as they travel to Germany to seek higher wages and government benefits in the rich Western economy

**Body**

Poland is losing large numbers of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** from its workforce as they travel to [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) to seek higher wages and government benefits in the rich Western economy, according to a report published Tuesday.

Although the refugees are not economic migrants, they are increasingly taking on work as the war in Ukraine drags on for more than a year and a half.

Where they choose to live impacts labor markets in European nations, which are desperate for workers and are facing demographic declines due to low birthrates.

Poland is not their first choice anymore, said Michalina Sielewicz, director of economic development for EWL, an employment agency that carried out the research along with the Center for East European Studies at the University of Warsaw.

“We should be worried,” she said.

But an economist cautioned that ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** cannot solve all of the labor shortages. Andrzej Kubisiak with the state-funded Polish Economic Institute said the greatest demand for workers in Poland and other countries in the region is in manufacturing, construction and logistics. Those are jobs traditionally done by men, while most of the ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are women.

“We need men but get refugee women who are not economic migrants, they are refugees. This is a different type of migration,” said Kubisiak, who was not a participant in the research. “They look for a place to live, not to work.”

The study sought to understand why the number of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** has been decreasing in Poland, a first stop for many after [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, and why the number has been growing in Germany. For the first months of the war, Poland hosted more ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** than any other country.

That has changed. According to [*European Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/european-union) statistics, there were 1.1 million Ukrainian citizens registered in Germany at the end of June, compared to 975,000 in Poland. That amounts to a decrease of more than 350,000 in Poland since August 2022, while the number has grown more than 410,000 in Germany.

Of the 350,000 who left Poland, 150,000 went to Germany, according to the report, titled “From Poland to Germany. New Trends in Ukrainian Refugee Migration.”

The study found that a developing network of Ukrainians in Germany is a factor in the migration shift, as people already established there help friends and acquaintances make the step. The Ukrainians questioned in the study also gave other reasons for choosing Germany, including higher wages, higher social benefits for refugees and better medical services.

The study also pointed to German language classes organized by the government for refugees as an important factor that has helped Ukrainians become integrated into society and find their way in the workforce. The Polish government, by contrast, does not offer free language training to refugees.

The study interviewed 400 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who had first fled to Poland and then moved to Germany.

Jan Malicki, director of the Center for East European studies, said 400 was a large enough group to draw conclusions. But he cautioned that the biggest unknown now is how many people will want to return to Ukraine after the war, something that will be determined by the extent of the destruction and what conditions the Ukrainian state will be able to offer them.

**Load-Date:** September 12, 2023

**End of Document**



[*'Ruthless': The Ukrainian refugees turned away from UK visa centres across Europe*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YF-KYR1-DY4H-K01P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 9, 2022 Wednesday 10:59 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:6

**Length:** 1238 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** 'It's a mad push to the front; there's no control at all. Everybody is worried and afraid,' says Chris Allford, husband of Ukrainian refugee, of visa centre in Poland

**Body**

When Andrei Toloshko heard that the UK had launched a family migration route for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** last week, he thought he, with his wife and young son would be able to join his London-based brother in the UK within days.

The family had fled from their home in Kyiv on 25 February after hearing bombs in the middle of the night. After a 48 drive they crossed the border to Moldova. Without relatives there, they hoped not to be there for long.

But when Mr Toloshko tried to book an appointment to submit their application under the UK visa scheme, he was told there were "no available appointments for this month, for next month, May, or June".

The 37-year-old, who worked as the director at commercial property consulting company in Kyiv, went to the visa centre in Chsenau - the only centre in Moldova - on Monday morning. There were already dozens of Ukrainians waiting there, and only two members of staff were there to assist them. He was told to return at 2pm. When they did so there were even more people and they could not get an appointment.

The family returned to the centre on Tuesday in the hope of getting an appointment - only to find that it was shut for a public holiday.

"I'm shocked," Mr Toloshko told The Independent after returning from the close centre. "The Home Office said they would try to make it faster, but it's no different to normal. They are obviously completely unprepared for this situation.

"They should make sure their commercial partner working in these centres understands this urgent situation. They should create another queue for Ukrainians, put more staff on the ground - just for one week or two weeks - or start collecting documents at the embassy."

The home secretary announced a family migration route for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** last week, under which she said tens of thousands of close relatives of British nationals and people settled in the UK would be eligible to come to the UK. The scheme was opened on Friday.

The Independent has set up a petition calling on the UK government to be at the forefront of the international community offering aid and support to those in Ukraine. To sign the petition .

In order to submit an application, refugees are required to attend a UK visa centre, which are run by the Home Office's commercial partner TLScontact. There are only one or two of these centres in most EU countries, meaning many refugees must travel for several hours to attend one.

There are also issues with capacity, with UK-based family members and immigration lawyers reporting that they have been unable to find a free appointment slot on the website.

Home Office figures show only 760 visas have been granted so far under the family route, despite tens of thousands of applications having been submitted.

The Home Office has placed 35 additional Home Office staff in visa centres across Europe. There are believed to be 57 centres across the continent.

Chris Allsford, 50, from southwest England, is currently in Warsaw, Poland, where he drove from the UK to meet his Ukrainian wife Svitlana, 44, on Sunday evening after she fled from eastern Ukraine, described "poor organisation" in the UK visa system.

"They've set up a visa centre in a hotel. There are around 300 people there every morning. You're told to go away and make an application online, but you've got people here who don't speak any English and are probably not accustomed to using the internet," he said.

"They say if you don't have an appointment come back at 6pm. At 5pm there's a huge queue, then they shut the door at 5.45. I asked why a staff member why they told everyone to come back at 6pm, and she just said I thought we could do more but we're tired.

"You don't want to argue with them, but you're looking around at people who have fled a warzone and are exhausted. In the whole queue there are probably three men - the rest are women and children."

Mr Allsford told of one case of a woman with three young children who arrived yesterday with an appointment, but was told to leave because she needed to make a separate application for her and each of her children.

"There's a real lack of information. It would help if they had more staff to give people information. At the moment you literally push your way through the crowd to the door, and then they tell you to go away, book an appointment and print a checklist. It's a mad push to the front; there's no control at all. Everybody is worried and afraid."

In another case, Uliana, whose sister-in-law is currently in Bergamo, Italy, with her two young children - Uliana's brother stayed in Ukraine to defend the country - and her mother, trying to submit a visa application, said the family was "driven onto the streets" after trying to get an appointment on Tuesday.

The family, who are staying in a monastery, travelled for an hour and 20 minutes by car - which they rented out for 150 - to reach the nearest visa centre in Milan on Monday, only to be told that they had filled out the forms incorrectly as each individual had to have their own form.

Uliana, who didn't want to use her full name, said were told that there were no appointments available for the rest of the month, but that they could come back early the following day and the staff would try to fit them in.

The family did so - again paying 150 for a rental car - only to be told they could not be seen again.

"They arrived there so early, woke up a small child. By 8am they were already there, waiting for them when they open there at 8:30, but when they went in the same man who told them to come back did not want to accept them," said Uliana.

This morning at 8:15am in Rzeszow visa application centre. No staff in sight. Now they're sending people home as they're overwhelmed and unable to process so many people. Booking system broken. No order of any kind. Disgrace. [*@ukhomeoffice*](https://twitter.com/ukhomeoffice?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*@pritipatel*](https://twitter.com/pritipatel?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*@PhilipDaviesUK*](https://twitter.com/PhilipDaviesUK?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*@alexsobel*](https://twitter.com/alexsobel?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/tYAsZNYTDI*](https://t.co/tYAsZNYTDI) - Marianne Kay (@marianne\_ua) [*March 8, 2022*](https://twitter.com/marianne_ua/status/1501159596014112771?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

"[The staff] are so ruthless. They drove them out into the street, and they told them to leave. They didn't look at those poor little children. They all cried and begged them, saying they had already travelled twice, in a rented a car, from such a long way."

A government spokesperson said: "We are working to process applications as quickly as possible and submitting an application in English reduces delays, which means we can get people here more efficiently.

"However, if someone is unable to provide translated documents they should still submit their application with untranslated documents. Support is available to applicants through our free 24/7 helpline and in visa application centres."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*More than 100,000 Britons register to sponsor Ukrainian refugees in first hours of scheme opening*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650J-MN31-DY4H-K1YW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 5:25 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:8

**Length:** 640 words

**Byline:** Ashley Cowburn

**Highlight:** Scheme offers those providing a home to refugees a £350 monthly payment

**Body**

More than 100,000 people have registered [*their interest in sponsoring*](https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk/) ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) to stay in their homes - just 24 hours after the government website went live.

Offering those who provide sanctuary a monthly payment of £350, the scheme was formally launched on Monday after days of criticism over the government's handling of the humanitarian crisis following Russia's invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

[*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) told MPs it will allow Ukrainian's with no family links to come to the UK and benefit from "unrestricted access" to benefits, employment and healthcare.

The levelling-up secretary added there would be "no limit" to the number of Ukrainian's who can benefit from the scheme.

At 9.30pm - five hours after being launched on Monday - more than 89,000 people had registered their interest in the programme, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities said.

On Tuesday afternoon, Boris Johnson posted on social media: "Thank you to everyone across the country who has stepped up to offer their help so far."

"It's fantastic that over 100,000 people and organisations have recorded their interest in supporting Ukrainians fleeing the war through the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

The website - Homes for Ukraine - states: "This bespoke scheme will offer a route to those who want to come to the UK who have someone here willing to provide them with a home.

The website adds: "Sponsors should provide accommodation for as long as they are able, but we have a minimum expectation of 6 months.

"Someone is eligible for the scheme if they are a Ukrainian national or the immediate family member of a Ukrainian national, and were resident in Ukraine prior to 1 January 2022."

It adds those members of the public with a person they wish to sponsor should get in contact with them directly and prepare to fill in a visa application, which will go live on 18 March, with all their details.

"If you don't know anyone who you wish to sponsor you may wish to get in touch with charities, faith groups or local community organisations who are starting to make connections between individuals," it adds.

However, within minutes of the website going live, the link to the registration page was broken, [*leading users to a page stating that the site "cannot be reached".*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/homes-for-ukraine-refugees-government-sponsor-b2035528.html)

Labour MP Mike Kane pointed out that the website had crashed, noting that the ITV journalist Paul Brand had reported that is was not working and that the site could not be reached.

In response, Mr Gove appeared to deny the claim, saying: "I'm very sorry if Paul Brand's internet connection is wonky.

"It seems as though the connection for my honourable friend the member for Rutland and Melton is superior - she has just signed up."

Earlier the transport secretary[*Grant Shapps announced he would be signing up to the scheme*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-refugees-boris-johnson-no-10-b2035313.html) to sponsor a Ukrainian refugee to live with his family.

"We've spent the past few weeks as a family discussing the devastating situation in Ukraine, and so we intend to apply today to join other UK households in offering our home to provide refuge to Ukrainians until it is safe for them to return to their country," he said in a message at lunchtime on Monday.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*What to know about the scheme for Britons to house Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650G-TC31-DY4H-K0J2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 6:55 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 866 words

**Byline:** Benjamin Cooper

**Highlight:** Michael Gove said 'tens of thousands' of Ukrainians were potentially set to benefit from the programme.

**Body**

[*People*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/people) keen to offer refugees shelter in the UK can register their interest in sponsoring Ukrainians through the Government's new humanitarian scheme from Monday.

Levelling Up Secretary [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) has said the process of matching [*Britons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britons) with people fleeing the conflict will take place from Friday, while he expects the first refugees to use the new route will make their way to the UK by the end of the week.

Mr Gove said more than 3,000 visas have so far been issued to Ukrainians seeking help in the UK, with the Cabinet minister estimating "tens of thousands" more will be provided.

- What is the scheme?

The Homes for Ukraine programme will allow individuals, charities, community groups and businesses to bring people escaping the war to safety - even if they have no ties to the UK.

Anyone with a room or home available can offer it to a Ukrainian individual or a family, though those offering will be vetted and Ukrainian applicants will undergo security checks.

- How long can refugees stay with a family or individual?

Members of the public will be able to nominate a Ukrainian family to stay with them for at least six months.

Sponsored Ukrainians will be granted three years' leave to remain in the UK, with entitlement to work and access public services.

- What security checks will be carried out?

The exact detail is not known, but Mr Gove has said steps will be taken to ensure people who might be "intent on exploitation" are prevented from "abusing" the new scheme.

The Cabinet minister told Sky News: "We absolutely do need to make sure, first of all, that the people in Ukraine are who they say they are, so there need to be some security checks there.

"There's been understandable concern about the scheme being exploited possibly by criminal elements. So, that's the first thing.

"Then the second thing is we do need to make sure that people here ... are in a position to provide that support, which is why there will need to be security checks as well to make sure that those - and I think it would only ever be a tiny minority, but still - those who might be intent on exploitation can be prevented from abusing the system."

A spokesperson for the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) said the charity did not want to see "unnecessary barriers" built into the process, but "it is vital child protection is built into every stage of the Government's and local authorities' response to this crisis".

- Is there any compensation for hosting?

Britons offering accommodation to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** will receive a "thank you" payment of £350 per month.

Mr Gove has also said local authority areas will be entitled to more than £10,000 per Ukrainian refugee using the fresh route to the UK.

"Additional payments" will be available to support school-age children who need to be accommodated within the education system, he said.

NEW: We're making changes to the Ukraine Family Scheme to make it quicker & simpler.This will mean from Tuesday Ukrainians with passports don't need to visit a Visa Application Centre to provide biometrics before coming here.Security checks will continue on all cases. [*pic.twitter.com/cpJjgmSwXo*](https://t.co/cpJjgmSwXo) - Home Office (@ukhomeoffice) [*March 10, 2022*](https://twitter.com/ukhomeoffice/status/1501912093464924161?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

- How do you apply?

The [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) is due to launch its website gathering expressions of interest from potential hosts on Monday.

- What has been the response?

Mr Gove has said he would personally take in a Ukrainian refugee and Academy Award-nominated actor Benedict Cumberbatch said from the Baftas red carpet on Sunday that he hopes to take part in the scheme.

But there has been criticism too, with the Refugee Council noting unlike the UK all EU countries have waived visa requirements for Ukrainians in the short term.

Council chief executive Enver Solomon told [*The Guardian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/guardian) the UK scheme was "effectively a managed migration route, which is not suitable to use to respond to a humanitarian crisis".

Mr Solomon also said the programme should only be one part of Britain's response to the crisis.

"But if it's going to work, it needs to be delivered with all the right resource and all the necessary entitlements for Ukrainians - so they're able to get all the healthcare they need, access housing benefit - because the reality is, the sponsor arrangement will be a short-term measure," he said.

"This conflict doesn't look like it's going to end quickly. There needs to be a clear pathway to longer-term accommodations."

There have been also concerns about the tight timeframe the Government has provided, with the NSPCC in its statement calling it an "ambitious turnaround".

The charity said it was "essential that the Government works closely with local authorities, the fostering community, charities and other key local partners to ensure this sponsorship scheme is ultimately safe; has appropriate levels of support for traumatised Ukrainian children who have fled bloodshed, and on-going assistance available for their sponsors".

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: Priti Patel is blind to her own cruelty over Ukrainian refugees - but we should've seen this coming*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YH-4931-DY4H-K2TS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 9, 2022 Wednesday 7:24 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:2

**Length:** 814 words

**Byline:** Tom Peck

**Highlight:** To get to Britain, Ukrainian people have to find a pop-up visa centre that's been deliberately hidden from them

**Body**

As we stare down the barrel of yet another horrific global catastrophe, it feels as if we are in that now-familiar phase in which there is a knee-jerk reaction of outrage should anyone dare to criticise the government. As if to do so would be somehow unpatriotic.

Trouble is, we've been here before. It is not yet two years since vitriol was heaped upon anyone who dared to whisper that Boris Johnson didn't have a clue what he was doing. That he should have locked down faster. That, dare one even think it, those giant Nightingale hospitals were a crass PR stunt. A multi-storey car park full of beds, but no one to staff them.

And if you dare to suggest, again, that Johnson is floundering in the dark, making it up as he goes along, you can expect more of the same. Even though what Johnson does is exactly the same. If in doubt - and he is always in doubt - just claim that you're "leading the world". Heard that one before? At Prime Minister's Questions, he was, unsurprisingly, expected to account for the fact that the UK is once again making a fool of itself on the subject of immigration, and in this case, refugee status for Ukrainians fleeing war.

Every other comparable country has opened its arms and flung open its borders. According to a Guardian reporter at a Romanian airport on Wednesday morning, every flight out was full of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***; be it to Frankfurt or even to Dublin. Except for the flight to London Luton, for the sole reason that this was the only destination that required visas to have been processed prior to take off.

So what was Johnson's answer? "We have done more to resettle vulnerable people than any other European country since 2015," he said.

This is such preposterous garbage it is incredibly offensive. It hardly needs to be repeated that in 2016, Germany granted asylum to a million Syrian refugees, while Johnson's Brexit pals exploited their appalling deaths in the Mediterranean to win their referendum.

The prime minister has also yet to provide any kind of reasonable explanation for why independent reports have concluded that he personally intervened to assist in the evacuation of dogs from Afghanistan, ahead of actual human beings who had assisted British armed forces (one of whom drowned when his dinghy capsized in the Channel a few weeks later.)

While he spoke, news reporters in Ukraine and in the towns over its borders were reduced to sitting on telephone helplines to assist desperate families who didn't speak English, only to be told, in the end, that they couldn't be helped.

After Prime Minister's Questions, the PM's spokesperson was on hand to explain exactly what was happening with regard to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** trying to get to Britain, as the details that had come to light were so preposterous and so egregious that could hardly be believed. But the reality was worse. There will still be no visa processing centre in Calais, because to have one there would apparently incentivise people to go there.

There is to be a "pop up" centre in Lille, 75 miles away, but it will be by appointment only. Appointments will be virtually impossible to secure, and the location of this centre will remain secret.

Naturally, this is all the work of Priti Patel. And sadly, we must return, once again to the now home secretary's appearance on BBC Question Time[*more than ten years ago*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_5aodBfdFTA). Back then, she was arguing in favour of the death penalty, because she is simply that cruel; and when it was pointed out to her, by Private Eye editor Ian Hislop, that wherever the death penalty still exists, innocent people are executed, she didn't appear to appreciate the points being put to her.

It is always [*worth rewatching*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_5aodBfdFTA) , because it is frankly the best way to understand why the Home Office functions in the way it does. Because it is run by someone who is not merely cruel by nature, but who doesn't seem to recognise how cruel she is.

And it is also worth recalling that she has been sacked once for [*endangering national security*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/priti-patel-sacked-quits-theresa-may-fired-cabinet-israel-meetings-international-development-secretary-a8044166.html) , and when the adviser on ministerial standards found her to have broken the ministerial code, he resigned because she wasn't sacked again.

All this is preventable, of course it is. Things could very easily be better. On Tuesday evening, Johnson led two separate standing ovations in the House of Commons to the Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky.

Last week, he also rose to applaud the Ukrainian ambassador, who was in the public gallery at Prime Minister's Questions. A week later, the same man, Vadym Prystaiko, was giving evidence to a parliamentary committee about how even he, the actual ambassador, had struggled to acquire a UK visa for his wife.

And while all this goes on, Ukrainian people trek halfway across France and back, trying to find a pop up visa centre that's been deliberately hidden from them. It really is world-beating stuff, though not quite in the way the prime minister imagines.

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Priti Patel accused of misleading MPs over help for Ukrainian refugees at Calais*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y8-51B1-JBNF-W03W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 1:11 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:4

**Length:** 796 words

**Byline:** Andrew Woodcock

**Highlight:** Home secretary wrongly claimed to have set up visa centre which is not yet operational

**Body**

[*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) has been accused by a senior Conservative MP of misleading parliament over arrangements for ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) trying to reach the UK via [*Calais*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/calais).

A furious Sir Roger Gale told the Commons that "in any normal administration", her behaviour would have been a resignation matter.

Boris Johnson's government has been blasted as "inhumane" by France over its treatment of Ukrainians arriving at the port, who are being turned away and told to apply for visas in Paris or Brussels.

[*Ms Patel has come under fire*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-refugees-priti-patel-calais-b2029674.html) for implementing a system which is much less generous than in other European countries, resulting in just 300 being granted the right to enter Britain by Monday, at a time when Poland is hosting more than 1 million and other EU states have opened their doors to hundreds of thousands more.

In the House of Commons on Monday, Ms Patel twice claimed that she had set up a visa application centre (VAC) on the way to the French port to process applications from people fleeing the Russian invasion.

However, when told later in the debate that Downing Street did not believe that a VAC was yet in operation, she backtracked, telling shadow home secretary [*Yvette Cooper*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/yvette-cooper) that "we are setting up another VAC en route to Calais".

Instead of admitting that she had given inaccurate information, Ms Patel wrongly told Ms Cooper that she had already "made quite clear" that the centre had not yet been set up and accused the Labour frontbencher of mishearing her earlier comments.

What she had in fact told MPs was that "we have set up a bespoke VAC en route to Calais but away from the port".

The Independent is raising money for the people of Ukraine - if you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

So far our appeal has raised £115,000 for the people of Ukraine, but they need more, please give what you can to help support them.

The Home Office later confirmed in a statement that the UK was "in the process" of setting up a VAC in France to process applications from Ukrainians referred to it by Border Force. Ministers today said that it was likely to be sited in Lille, around 75 miles away from Calais.

Veteran Tory backbencher Sir Roger, who asked Ms Patel about the situation in Calais during Monday's debate, said it was clear that the home secretary's reply was "untrue".

The Home Secretary said yesterday that a visa centre had already been set up in Calais. This was untrue and under any normal administration that would be a resigning matter. [*pic.twitter.com/ZPGpfwesCy*](https://t.co/ZPGpfwesCy) - Sir Roger Gale MP (@SirRogerGale) [*March 8, 2022*](https://twitter.com/SirRogerGale/status/1501186187565936641?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

"The home secretary has misled the House of Commons," he said.

"In response to my question yesterday she said 'I have made it clear, in terms of the visa application centre that has now been set up en-route to Calais that we have staff in Calais'.

"That is untrue. There was no visa application centre 'en-route to Calais' and refugees from the war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) are being sent back to Paris or Brussels to obtain visas.

"What is needed is a visa waiver scheme that allows Ukrainian children and adults with a valid Ukrainian passport to be allowed into Britain without unnecessary bureaucracy and delay."

He told the House of Commons today: "There is no visa centre at Lille. A week ago the home secretary announced a humanitarian sponsorship visa. There is as yet no humanitarian sponsor visa."

Sir Roger called on the government to allow anyone with a Ukrainian passport into the UK without a visa.

There was no immediate response from the Home Office this morning to The Independent's query over whether Ms Patel will now correct the record or apologise for misleading the Commons.

Unlike other European countries, the UK is demanding that [*Ukrainians seeking sanctuary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugee-visa-priti-patel-home-office-uk-b2030499.html) apply for visas, which are granted only to those with family links in Britain. A second scheme, not yet in operation, will allow entry to individuals sponsored by councils, charities or businesses.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*No plans to set up UK visa processing centre for Ukrainian refugees in Calais*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y9-91J1-DY4H-K09V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 8:07 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 671 words

**Byline:** Pa Reporters

**Highlight:** Government officials intend to redirect those seeking sanctuary to a small "pop-up" visa application centre in Lille

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving in [*Calais*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/calais) in the hope of coming to the UK will be told to travel more than 70 miles to apply for visas.

It is understood Government officials currently have no plans to set up a processing centre in the port city in northern [*France*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/france) , instead intending to redirect those seeking sanctuary to a small "pop-up" visa application centre in [*Lille*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lille).

It comes as ministers told the Commons there was a need to avoid creating "choke points" in Calais to encourage a "smooth flow of people" as concerns were raised over Ukrainians being turned away,

I think it is important that when you do have people coming to your country, maybe coming from a war zone where their previous history is unclear, what they have been up to, it is important to have checks

Boris Johnson

The decision is said to have been made to avoid drawing Ukrainians to the area amid fears they could be targeted by people smuggling gangs as they look to cross the English Channel.

But the [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) is yet to confirm when the Lille site will open, or where exactly it will be although it is anticipated to be operating by the end of the week and is not intended to become a large-scale visa application centre.

The Government has come under repeated criticism from Labour over its resettlement policy for those fleeing war-torn Ukraine amid claims of chaotic decision making.

There has also been confusion over the plans after Home Secretary Priti Patel insisted that a processing centre "en route" to Calais would be set up and that staff were "on the ground" there.

Ukrainians without their own transport will be able to use the Eurostar free to get to centres in Lille, Paris and Brussels.

It can take up to 90 minutes to travel by train from Calais to Lille, although the fastest services are just 28 minutes, with around 19 trains a day travelling between the two destinations.

Boris Johnson defended the need for border checks on refugees fleeing to Britain from Ukraine amid suggestions that Russian agents could try to abuse the system, after Home Office minister [*Kevin Foster*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kevin-foster) told the Commons there were already people "presenting at Calais with false documents claiming to be Ukrainian" and the Government "will not take chances with the security of this country and our people".

The Prime Minister said: "I think it is important that when you do have people coming to your country, maybe coming from a war zone where their previous history is unclear, what they have been up to, it is important to have checks.

"That is one thing we are able to do. I think having some sort of check, some sort of control is an important feature of the way we do things. I think it is valuable.

"It doesn't mean we aren't going to be massively, massively generous. But I think to have a system of simply uncontrolled immigration isn't right."

Former foreign secretary Jeremy Hunt was highly critical of the existing provisions for refugees, with the senior Tory MP telling LBC's Tonight with Andrew Marr: "This is a big area of failure where I think we've misjudged the public mood."

He questioned how Britain would feel if up to five million people flee Ukraine and the UK has only accepted a few hundred individuals "because you have to have submitted your biometric details in a city before you get to the UK".

"I don't feel we're rising to the seriousness of the situation and I think it's out of touch with the generous instincts of the British people," Mr Hunt added

More than 500 visas have now been issued under the Ukraine Family Scheme, which launched on Friday, and more than 10,000 applications have been submitted, Mr Foster told the Commons.

Hundreds of staff are thought to have been deployed to process visas and it is understood the Home Office has also taken up Defence Secretary Ben Wallace's offer of more resources from the Ministry of Defence.

So far no visas are said to have been rejected, but a small number have been deferred while officials seek more information. Staff are taking about 20 minutes to turn around completed applications.

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UK accused of being 'heartless' after offer to take in Ukrainian refugees 'falls well short of what is needed'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WP-86D1-DY4H-K1MX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 1, 2022 Tuesday 12:23 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:4

**Length:** 812 words

**Byline:** May Bulman and Samuel Lovett

**Highlight:** Priti Patel told 'more can and should be done' after Commons announcement reveals 'nothing new'

**Body**

Ministers have been accused of being "heartless and mean-spirited" after it emerged that a new humanitarian route for [***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) ***refugees*** amounts to only small adjustments to visa rules which will benefit only certain family members of British citizens.

Home secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) told MPs on Monday that the government had introduced a "bespoke humanitarian route" for people fleeing the Russian invasion in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , saying it would allow an additional 100,000 Ukrainians to seek sanctuary in the UK.

However, it later emerged that this does not go beyond the easing of rules for a limited pool of family members of UK residents, which was announced over the weekend and has already been [*branded*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-refugees-uk-family-russia-b2024712.html) a "plaster for an open wound".

Charities criticised the government's failure to do as the EU has done and waive all visa rules for refugees fleeing Ukraine, which Ms Patel [*insisted*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-refugees-visa-uk-priti-patel-b2025000.html) would undermine "the strongest security advice". Lawyers said they were sceptical about the claims that 100,000 people would be helped under her changes.

Shadow immigration minister Yvette Cooper accused the home secretary of "complete confusion" around what is being offered to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, asking her in the House of Commons: "How on earth is the home secretary so unprepared for something she's been warning about for weeks?"

It comes as The Independent 's Refugees Welcome campaign called on the UK government to set up a resettlement scheme to give Ukrainians fleeing the invasion sanctuary in Britain.

More than 500,000 people have already fled Ukraine since the beginning of the invasion, and the UN estimates that this figure could reach 4 million.

Temporary visa concessions announced by the Home Office on Sunday mean that certain family members of British nationals who do not meet the usual eligibility criteria but pass security checks may be granted permission to enter the UK outside the rules for 12 months.

However, this applies to spouses, the parents of children under 18, children under 18 and close relatives requiring care -excluding many relatives including parents, adult children, siblings.

Immigration barrister Colin Yeo told The Independent he was "sceptical" about Ms Patel's claim that the concessions would help 100,000 Ukrainians.

"There aren't many Ukrainians in the UK so I can't see how there are going to be 100,000 eligible family members," he said, adding: "The contrast with the simple generosity shown by the EU seems quite marked."

A Home Office spokesperson told The Independent the figure was based on "internal estimates" but did not explain how it was reached.

Enver Solomon, chief executive of the Refugee Council, said Ms Patel's announcement fell "well short of what is needed" and did "very little" to reassure Ukrainian's fleeing war and bloodshed that that they would be able to seek sanctuary in Britain.

"Compared to the EU's decision to take in refugees for up to three years without having to apply for asylum, it is heartless and mean spirited sending a message to desperate Ukrainians in search of safety that unless they have a family member in the UK, they are not welcome," he said.

Jon Featonby, policy and advocacy manager at the British Red Cross, said he "welcomed" it but that "much more can and should be done", and called for the lifting of all visa requirements for Ukrainians wishing to enter the UK.

"This would avoid people needing to go through a lengthy visa application process at a moment of crisis for them and their family, bringing the UK in line with many other European countries," he added.

Caroline Coombs, of campaign group Reunite Families, which has been supporting people in the UK trying to get their relatives out of Ukraine, said Ms Patel's announcement revealed "nothing new".

"We still have no idea if parents, grandparents and other family members of British citizens and settled people in the UK can come here. People are scared and have no idea what to do," she said.

It comes after 37 Conservatives, including former ministers Jeremy Hunt and Greg Clark, wrote to Boris Johnson on Monday urging the government to act "decisively", stating: "Ukrainian victims of war seeking refuge are welcome".

Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon meanwhile warned that a failure to waive visa requirements for Ukrainians seeking refuge could be "embarrassing" for the UK and called on the prime minister to allow anyone fleeing the Russian invasion to come to the UK, saying the government could "sort the paperwork later on".

A poll by YouGov last week found almost two-thirds of [*British people would support the introduction of a resettlement scheme*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-war-refugees-uk-resettlement-b2023549.html) for those fleeing Ukraine.

Home secretary Priti Patel said: "I am committed to ensuring the UK is as generous as possible to the people of Ukraine, just as we have been to the people of Afghanistan and Hong Kong, and further announcements will be made in due course."

**Load-Date:** March 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Europe accused of `double-standard' on Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65G4-59H1-JBNF-W3BW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 17, 2022 Tuesday 1:43 AM GMT

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**Length:** 604 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** The head of the world's largest humanitarian network says the quick acceptance of Ukrainians fleeing Russia's aggression puts a spotlight on Europe's "double standard" for migrants - compared to its nonwelcome for people fleeing violence in Africa, the Mideast and elsewhere

**Body**

The quick acceptance of Ukrainians fleeing [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's aggression puts a spotlight on [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) 's "double standard" for migrants, standing against its nonwelcome for people fleeing violence in [*Africa*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/africa) , the Mideast and elsewhere, the head of the world's largest humanitarian network said Monday.

Francesco Rocca, president of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, said he doesn't think "there is any difference" between someone fleeing eastern Ukraine's Donbas region and someone escaping the Boko Haram extremist group in Nigeria.

"Those who are fleeing violence, those who are seeking protection, should be treated equally," said Rocca, whose organization operates in more than 192 countries with almost 15 million volunteers.

Speaking at a news conference, he said there is "a moral imperative" to help people escaping violence and upheavals, and "the political, public and humanitarian response to the Ukraine crisis has shown what is possible when humanity and dignity comes first, when there is global solidarity."

"We hoped that the Ukrainian crisis would have been a turning point in the European migration policies," Rocca said. "But unfortunately, this was not the case."

He said the 27-member [*European Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/european-union) still has different approaches to migration at its eastern border from Ukraine and its southern border on the Mediterranean.

The war, which Russia insists on calling a "special military operation," has prompted one of the worst humanitarian crises in Europe since World War II.

Since Russia invaded on Feb. 24, more than 6 million people have fled Ukraine, with Poland absorbing more than 3.3 million and over 900,000 going to Romania, 605,000 to Hungary, 463,000 to Moldova and 421,000 to Slovakia, according to the U.N. refugee agency.

By contrast, Rocca said, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers trying to get to Europe are still dying, facing abuse and struggling to access essential services.

Over 48,000 migrants have died or disappeared since 2014 while traveling at sea, and the deadliest route is that taken by migrants across the central Mediterranean to Europe, with at least 19,000 such deaths, he said.

Those who arrive, mainly in Italy, Greece and Spain, are often put in camps and face long waits for their asylum claims to be heard.

"In Europe there is a big heart and soul, because the community in Europe were able to open their arms, receiving millions in a few days of Ukrainians," Rocca said. "So, they lie about the threat that is coming from the Mediterranean Sea, when it comes about a few thousands of people."

He said that "ethnicity and nationality should not be a deciding factor to saving life."

"There is a double standard," Rocca said. "This is evident. It is in our eyes, and we cannot deny it when it comes about seeking protection."

Rocca was at U.N. headquarters for the first review of the July 2018 global compact to promote safe and orderly migration and reduce human smuggling and trafficking. It was the first global document to tackle the migration issue and was signed by more than 190 nations. U.S. President Donald Trump's administration boycotted the negotiations.

While progress has been made on the compact, mainly when it comes to Ukrainians, Rocca said there is still "a long road" to realize the compact's vision and commitments. He said many migrants' lives have been lost due to the failure of governments to change their policies to ensure safe and dignified migration.

"Governments have the right to set migration policies and to manage their borders," he said. "They are obliged to do so in a way that prevents suffering and death."

**Load-Date:** May 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees who have fled to UK placed in asylum hotels*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652N-VM51-DY4H-K1MB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 24, 2022 Thursday 2:23 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:3

**Length:** 1004 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Exclusive: 'Urgent clarity' needed on rights of Ukrainians arriving in Britain without visas as some families being put into asylum process that is 'not fit for purpose'

**Body**

Ukrainians who have arrived in the UK after fleeing from war have been placed in [*hotels*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hotels) for [*asylum seekers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/asylum-seekers-0) , The Independent has learnt.

Ministers are facing calls to provide "urgent clarity" on the rights of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** entering Britain without [*visas*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/visas) after it emerged a number have arrived via ferry from Ireland in recent weeks.

In some cases they have ended up in hotel accommodation, prompting concern that this leaves them in a system that is "not fit for purpose" and where they will face long delays on their asylum decision, creating a discriminatory approach towards those arriving without visas.

The UK government has introduced two schemes to help Ukrainians: one enabling them to join relatives in Britain and the other allowing them to come to the country if they know a member of the British public who is able and willing to house them.

However, the application processes for both schemes have been fraught with delays and complications, which has reportedly led some Ukrainians to make their own way to the UK without visas.

Bromsgrove and District Asylum Seeker Support (B&DASS), which supports asylum seekers in hotels, has been supporting a Ukrainian family and a single Ukrainian woman who have entered the country in the past two weeks and been placed in hotels in Bromsgrove and Birmingham.

The Independent is raising money for the people of Ukraine - if you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

Johannah Dyer, who volunteers for the group, said: "They are coming in via Ireland. They will fly in from say Hungary to Ireland and then cross on a normal passenger ferry. That's not illegal. It's only when they get here and need support that they get thrown into the asylum system.

"They're very traumatised. When they first arrived two weeks ago, they were completely shell-shocked ... They find themselves suddenly in an asylum seeker hotel with people from all around the world and they don't know what's happening at home. We know there will be others in this situation."

Katie Reilly, another volunteer for the group, added: "They've fled the current situation, but without visas, so they have been plunged into the asylum process.

"We are supporting families from Afghanistan who have fled, arrived here and are declared asylum seekers. This will happen with Ukrainians in coming months - we must ensure safe routes for all."

Ukrainians who have family in the UK and arrive without a visa are eligible for a six months of leave to remain, which then allows them to switch to a visa under the family scheme, the Home Office has said.

It is unclear whether those arriving without visas who do not have family in Britain are also eligible for this temporary status, and if not whether they have any other option but to enter the asylum system.

Leyla Williams, deputy director of West London Welcome, a refugee charity that has been supporting newly arriving Ukrainians, said she was "particularly concerned" about vulnerable homeless families who have arrived without visas and have no family to join here.

"It is unclear whether they should be applying for visas or claiming asylum. Grassroots charities like ours are ensuring they are safely housed and have legal advice, but it is vital the government provide urgent clarity to those without visas," she said.

"There should be no discrimination towards Ukrainians who are arriving here in whichever ways they can, who are all fleeing the same war and all require protection."

Louise Calvey, of Refugee Action, said the charity was aware of a number of Ukrainians who had recently entered the UK without visas, and that it was concerned that people would be forced to enter an asylum system that is "not fit for purpose", because of lengthy delays and poor housing.

About 25,000 asylum seekers in the UK are [*being held in hotels*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/home-office-asylum-seekers-hotels-b2006885.html) , with some having been there for more than a year. Tens of thousands have been awaiting a decision on their claim for more than 12 months, with hundreds waiting for [*more than five years*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/asylum-seekers-delays-home-office-b1839755.html).

Ms Calvey said they should be able to apply for leave to remain without having to request asylum, adding: "Doubtless some will end up [in the asylum system] due to chronic gaps in immigration advice."

She added that requiring people to do security checks before entering the UK was "absolute nonsense" and that the government should be doing this once people have arrived in the country.

"By sticking to their visa requirements they've forced people through irregular routes rather than letting people in normally and checking on arrival. As per usual their policy has actually been totally counterproductive," she added.

A government spokesperson said: "The Ukraine Family Scheme provides an immediate pathway for Ukrainians with family already settled in the UK to come to our country and we encourage all those who are eligible to apply. Last week we also opened a new sponsorship route, which allows Ukrainians with no family ties to the UK to be sponsored to come here.

"Ukrainians in Ireland wishing to come to the UK should apply to either of these schemes before seeking to travel. We continue to work closely with Ireland on the operation of the Common Travel Area, including data sharing and operational co-operation."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page

**Load-Date:** March 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*What to know about the scheme for Britons to house Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650H-95K1-JBNF-W542-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 8:51 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 974 words

**Byline:** Benjamin Cooper

**Highlight:** UK says 'tens of thousands' of Ukrainians potentially set to benefit from scheme

**Body**

People keen to offer refugees shelter in the UK can register their interest in sponsoring Ukrainians through the government's new humanitarian scheme from Monday.

Levelling up secretary Michael Gove has said the process of matching Britons with people fleeing the conflict will take place from Friday, while he expects the first refugees to use the new route will make their way to the UK by the end of the week.

Mr Gove said more than 3,000 visas have so far been issued to Ukrainians seeking help in the UK, with the Cabinet minister estimating "tens of thousands" more will be provided.

Here's everything we know about the Homes for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) scheme:

What is the scheme?

The Homes for Ukraine programme will allow individuals, charities, community groups and businesses to bring people escaping the war to safety - even if they have no ties to the UK.

Anyone with a room or home available can offer it to a Ukrainian individual or a family, though those offering will be vetted and Ukrainian applicants will undergo security checks.

How long can refugees stay with a family or individual?

Members of the public will be able to nominate a Ukrainian family to stay with them for at least six months.

Sponsored Ukrainians will be granted three years' leave to remain in the UK, with entitlement to work and access public services.

What security checks will be carried out?

The exact detail is not known, but Mr Gove has said steps will be taken to ensure people who might be "intent on exploitation" are prevented from "abusing" the new scheme.

The Cabinet minister told Sky News: "We absolutely do need to make sure, first of all, that the people in Ukraine are who they say they are, so there need to be some security checks there.

"There's been understandable concern about the scheme being exploited possibly by criminal elements. So, that's the first thing.

The Independent is raising money for the people of Ukraine - if you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

"Then the second thing is we do need to make sure that people here ... are in a position to provide that support, which is why there will need to be security checks as well to make sure that those - and I think it would only ever be a tiny minority, but still - those who might be intent on exploitation can be prevented from abusing the system."

A spokesperson for the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) said the charity did not want to see "unnecessary barriers" built into the process, but "it is vital child protection is built into every stage of the Government's and local authorities' response to this crisis".

Is there any compensation for hosting?

Britons offering accommodation to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** will receive a "thank you" payment of £350 per month.

Mr Gove has also said local authority areas will be entitled to more than £10,000 per Ukrainian refugee using the fresh route to the UK.

"Additional payments" will be available to support school-age children who need to be accommodated within the education system, he said.

How do you apply?

The government is due to launch its website gathering expressions of interest from potential hosts on Monday.

What has been the response?

Mr Gove has said he would personally take in a Ukrainian refugee and Academy Award-nominated actor Benedict Cumberbatch said from the Baftas red carpet on Sunday that he hopes to take part in the scheme.

But there has been criticism too, with the Refugee Council noting unlike the UK all EU countries have waived visa requirements for Ukrainians in the short term.

Council chief executive Enver Solomon told the Guardian the UK scheme was "effectively a managed migration route, which is not suitable to use to respond to a humanitarian crisis".

Mr Solomon also said the programme should only be one part of Britain's response to the crisis.

"But if it's going to work, it needs to be delivered with all the right resource and all the necessary entitlements for Ukrainians - so they're able to get all the healthcare they need, access housing benefit - because the reality is, the sponsor arrangement will be a short-term measure," he said.

"This conflict doesn't look like it's going to end quickly. There needs to be a clear pathway to longer-term accommodations."

There have been also concerns about the tight timeframe the government has provided, with the NSPCC in its statement calling it an "ambitious turnaround".

The charity said it was "essential that the government works closely with local authorities, the fostering community, charities and other key local partners to ensure this sponsorship scheme is ultimately safe; has appropriate levels of support for traumatised Ukrainian children who have fled bloodshed, and on-going assistance available for their sponsors".

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered.

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**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Scotland's 'super sponsor' scheme opens for Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651D-HK81-JBNF-W32K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 18, 2022 Friday 5:36 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 513 words

**Byline:** Lucinda Cameron

**Highlight:** First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said the country is reading and willing to welcome those fleeing the war in their homeland.

**Body**

[*Nicola Sturgeon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nicola-sturgeon) has told Ukrainians seeking refuge from the war that "[*Scotland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scotland) wants to welcome you", as she announced the Scottish Government's super sponsor scheme is open.

The scheme will provide people fleeing the conflict in their homeland with temporary accommodation while a more permanent place is found for them.

The First Minister has previously said Scotland could welcome 3,000 refugees from Ukraine as "an immediate step", before taking in "at least a proportionate share" of those coming to the UK.

On Friday, Ms Sturgeon tweeted a picture of the Saltire flag and said Scotland "wants to welcome you", adding: "We hope to offer you a quick & easy route here."

Our hearts were already open -now our doors are too

Nicola Sturgeon

She detailed how the scheme will work in a thread on [*Twitter*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/twitter) , and said people wanting to come to Scotland should select "Scottish Government" on the UK visa application site.

Ms Sturgeon wrote: "Choosing this option means that you do not have to arrange an individual sponsor before coming to Scotland. We will help you do that once you are here.

"When you first arrive in Scotland, we will provide temporary accommodation for you/your family while we put in place all the longer term support you need, including a place to stay. We want Scotland to be a safe, secure home for as long as you need."

She urged organisations and charities working with Ukrainians needing refuge to help spread the word about the Scottish route.

Ms Sturgeon said multi-agency teams are working to ensure accommodation, safeguarding and support "as well as the warmest of welcomes" is provided.

The First Minister asked anyone who lives in Scotland and can offer accommodation to register their interest through the UK site [*https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk*](https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk).

If you are seeking refuge from the war in Ukraine; or an organisation working with people displaced from Ukraine; or a Scottish resident able to offer accommodation and support, please read this and use links provided [*https://t.co/uxKbkVO7pk*](https://t.co/uxKbkVO7pk) - Nicola Sturgeon (@NicolaSturgeon) [*March 18, 2022*](https://twitter.com/NicolaSturgeon/status/1504845731659661334?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Details will be shared with the Scottish Government so appropriate matches can be arranged while immediate support is provided to those arriving.

She concluded: "Finally, my thanks to the teams in both Scottish and UK governments who have worked so hard in past few days to get this up and running so quickly.

"Our hearts were already open - now our doors are too #StandWithUkraine."

The Scottish Government's super sponsor route removes the need for applicants to be matched to a named individual before they are cleared to travel to the UK through the visa system.

The programme is available as an option to Ukrainians when applying for a visa under the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme, by opting for the organisational sponsor route and selecting "The Scottish Government" from the drop-down box in response to the question "Which organisation is sponsoring you?".

It is also possible for Ukrainians to come to Scotland using two other routes: the family visa and the individual sponsor route.

**Load-Date:** March 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*The Russian volunteers helping Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67N5-XM21-JBNF-W345-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 27, 2023 Monday 2:36 PM GMT

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**Section:** LONG READS; Version:1

**Length:** 1328 words

**Byline:** Mary Ilyushina and Ksenia Ivanova

**Highlight:** The people helping those forced to flee from Moscow’s invasion are doing so as a way to deal with their own fear, guilt, despair and anger, write Mary Ilyushina and Ksenia Ivanova

**Body**

To avoid the authorities, thousands of displaced Ukrainians in [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) are relying on a discreet network of unofficial volunteers working to bring war [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) through Russia to safety in [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe). It is a sort of Slavic echo of the Underground Railroad – the name given to the system of routes and safe places established in 19th-century America to help those escaping slavery.

These volunteers are not linked to each other, and are not part of any organisation. They often do not live in the same city and, for safety, most of them will never see each other in person. The common denominator is the risk they face from the Russian security forces, who are suspicious of citizen initiatives and have cracked down on all manner of civil society groups.

The independent volunteers do all kinds of things. Some work from home processing help requests. Others help to care for pets, gather food, clothing and medicine, or deliver to makeshift warehouses. Hosts who open their doors to Ukrainians or drivers who transport them across the Russian border face the steepest risk, as they are the ones interacting directly with refugees and the authorities.

None of the volunteers’ activities are illegal, but under Russia’s wartime laws, anything that involves Ukraine and does not fit with the current pro-war patriotic fervour is sensitive and regarded unfavourably by the security services.

“In our country, any volunteer organisation or any kind of attempt to self-organise is like a red rag for a bull,” says a [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) -born volunteer in her late fifties, who has lived in Russia for most of her life and has a Russian passport. She is at a stop along the snowy highway on her way to bring nine Ukrainians to the Finnish border from St Petersburg.

The Ukrainian-born volunteer says she makes the trip about five times a month, each time a gamble. A lot could go wrong: the car might swerve on the snow-covered road; its battery could die in the bitter cold; a tyre could burst. The Russian border guard might be in a bad mood; a refugee might carry too much money through customs, or do something else to attract undue attention.

The volunteer recalls one passenger, an older man, getting so drunk during the wait at the border that he tried to bum a cigarette from a Federal Security Service (FSB) guard, risking the whole operation.

“As long as you are here in my car and we have not reached the Finnish border, you listen only to me,” the volunteer strictly admonishes her passengers as a family boards her minivan at St Petersburg railway station.

Whether refugees make it across the border depends, in many ways, on the volunteer.

At the same time it launched the war in Ukraine, Moscow tightened the few loose screws across civil society, demonstrating through dismantling opposition and human rights groups that it would not tolerate any dissent.

The Kremlin’s desire for total control in a wartime setting has targeted official volunteer movements, forcing some to work in exile or shut down completely.

Those now aiding Ukrainians are split into two contrasting camps: “official” groups, like the one run by the governing United Russia party, and “unofficial” networks with no hierarchy or affiliation.

The “official” groups help Russian authorities to place Ukrainians in temporary shelters, where they are insistently offered Russian passports that make subsequent travel to the European Union nearly impossible. These groups deliver aid to occupied areas of eastern Ukrainian territories that the Kremlin now refers to as “liberated”.

Having passed the ideological check, they have no issue fundraising or talking publicly about their work.

The “unofficial” volunteers materialised primarily to close the gaps left by official aid groups: they bring phones to replace those seized by Russia at the border, find veterinarians for sick pets, obtain hard-to-find medicines, and do myriad other tasks – some mundane, others life-saving. They also offer a lifeline for those seeking shelter in a country that invaded their own. They charter buses, buy train tickets, or drive Ukrainian families to the border.

In some towns, the “unofficial volunteers” were forced to halt their activities after pressure from local law enforcement. Last May, police came to a temporary shelter in Tver, northwest of Moscow. They questioned Ukrainians about an independent Russian volunteer – 20-year-old Veronika Timakina – asking if she was “engaged in campaigning activities”, took photos of them, or had invited them to join any political party, Russian news outlets Verstka and Mediazona reported.

Tver’s Orthodox diocese was in charge of refugees there, and according to Timakina, Ukrainians were treated in a rather dismissive manner. It was difficult for them to get any support, including the $140 (£117) payment promised by Russian president Vladimir Putin to all Ukrainians relocating to Russia.

Timakina’s house and two other volunteers’ homes were later raided as part of a criminal investigation into whether they were involved in spreading “fake information” about the Russian army, a criminal charge Russia created at the onset of the invasion. All three activists left Russia, fearing further persecution.

Irina Gurskaya, a retired economist and activist in her late sixties from Penza in western Russia, was helping people from the razed Ukrainian city of Mariupol to reach the Estonian border. Soon, Gurskaya herself had to follow the same path.

Late last spring, someone spray-painted “Ukro-Nazi enabler” on her door. Then, a few days later, police searched her house following “anonymous complaints” about the aid packages she was stocking in her hallway. They took her in for questioning, she recalled in a mini-documentary by journalist Vladimir Sevrinovsky.

The police wanted to know what organisation was helping and financing Gurskaya. “I explained that [help comes from] complete strangers, even pensioners,” Gurskaya said. “One person will send 100 rubles, and the other will send 30,000 ... But for them, it was strange.”

She was released from the police station, but a few minutes later, two men in balaclavas grabbed her, put a hat over her head, and threw her into a car. The men twisted her arms and screamed, demanding answers to all the same questions.

“They yelled, ‘What do you need Ukrainians for? ... Let them sit here. If you escort at least one more out, we will find your children,’” Gurskaya said in the documentary. The activist was eventually told to burn the tickets she had bought for refugees. Soon after, Gurskaya fled the country.

The targeted volunteers in Tver and Penza had been outspoken about their opposition to the Kremlin policies, or had criticised the war. This public activity probably increased the likelihood of their being targeted. Most volunteers steer clear of conversations about politics.

“Overall, the main thing is not to conduct any conversations outside of the issue they need help with,” says another volunteer, who helps Ukrainians with documents and transportation. “Watch your mouth. That’s the main safety rule.”

“To me, a human life is above all else, and I don’t do anything illegal,” they add.

Volunteers interviewed for this article say they felt helpless when the war began, and assisting Ukrainians in Russia was their only way of dealing with fear, guilt, despair and anger. “My relatives told me I need to go out to protest, and I said I don’t think it’ll be easier for you if I’m fined and then jailed. They agreed with me,” the Ukrainian-born volunteer explains. “So volunteering was the only way for me.”

“My hope is that we will be able to create at least a tiny spot of light in this bloody mess,” she continues. “Somewhere deep down, I have this flicker of hope that maybe in 20 years, if I’m still alive, Ukraine will let me see my parents’ graves or see my siblings. Maybe I still have a chance. Maybe Ukraine will see this as a tiny sliver of light.”

© The Washington Post

**Load-Date:** February 27, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Rest of Europe must open borders to Ukrainian refugees, says Polish president*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650B-5211-DY4H-K0N8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 13, 2022 Sunday 2:31 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 374 words

**Byline:** Luke O'Reilly

**Highlight:** About 1.5 million people are thought to have fled to Poland since Russia's invasion began.

**Body**

Poland's president has called on the rest of [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) to open its borders in response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis.

[*Andrzej Duda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/andrzej-duda) told BBC's Sunday Morning programme that his country could end up taking in up to 2.5 million Ukrainians.

About 1.5 million people are thought to have fled to Poland since Russia's invasion began.

President Duda requested that other European countries open their borders to what he called the worst refugee crisis on the continent since the Second World War.

"It is the biggest crisis since the Second World War, definitely", he said.

"I would request that the borders are opened and refugees are accepted."

He added that he is "deeply grateful" to the [*Polish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/polish) people.

"I am really deeply grateful to my compatriots because what they have shown so far, I'm talking about ordinary people, they come to our borders with transport saying 'I'll take four people, I will take a whole family to my home'," he said.

"Just imagine that 1.5 million refugees have crossed the Polish border and we have not built even a single refugee camp because all of them have been accepted in private houses, in hotels, in guest houses, in motels, and in resorts."

However, he warned that up to five million refugees could end up fleeing Ukraine.

"According to experts, in an extreme situation it could be up to five million people," he said.

"Of course we are not the only country who is receiving them because [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) , which shares a border with Ukraine, is also getting refugees. Hungary has a border with Ukraine.

"More than half of all refugees who have left Ukraine are in Poland. So, if there are five million, just imagine that we get 2.5 million."

It came as Levelling Up Secretary Michael Gove announced the new [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine programme, which will allow individuals, charities, community groups and businesses to bring people escaping the war to safety - even if they have no ties to the UK.

So far more than 3,000 visas have been issued to Ukrainians seeking refuge in the UK

Britons offering accommodation to people fleeing Ukraine through the new route will receive a "thank you" payment of £350 per month.

Sponsored Ukrainians will be granted three years' leave to remain in the UK, with entitlement to work and access public services.

**Load-Date:** March 13, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: Ireland has embraced Ukrainian refugees - why not do the same for everyone else?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6534-8DP1-JBNF-W3WF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 26, 2022 Saturday 5:58 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:5

**Length:** 818 words

**Byline:** Alice Murphy

**Highlight:** While there is no question that my homeland is doing right by the people of Ukraine, such support should be extended to every man, woman, and child fleeing war and persecution from every corner of the world, writes Alice Murphy

**Body**

Ireland, the Land of a Hundred Thousand Welcomes, has been lauded the world over for opening its arms to desperate Ukrainians fleeing the murderous mania of Vladimir Putin.

Famed for their friendliness and natural inclination for craic, the Irish trade on a reputation for being one of the most hospitable countries on Earth, greeting strangers with smiles and a willingness to help however, whenever we can.

The beaming faces of thousands of Ukrainians safe and well in scenic spots across the Republic strengthen this stereotype in the purest way possible. But a peak under the rug of the state's ignoble asylum seeker policy suggests such warm céad míle filtes are exclusively reserved for a certain kind of people.

Widely considered as modern Ireland's greatest shame, Direct Provision was established in 1999 as a short-term solution to a sharp uptick in the influx of people seeking asylum in the country.

In most European countries, people in need of international protection receive financial assistance which enables them to live in that country while their application is pending. Under Direct Provision, however, this is not the case.

Ireland's accommodation system shunts vulnerable arrivals into Soviet-esque centres in remote areas, where they are served set meals in a canteen at fixed times and handed the princely sum of 38.80 (£29) per adult and 29.80 (£22) per child each week. That's a maximum "allowance" of just 5.50 (£4) a day.

The bulk of these glorified prisons were built in rural backwaters, with limited transport links and little to no support services. Each one has a chequered past; a convent in Waterford, a Midlands trailer park, abandoned Celtic-Tiger-era hotels.

Residents who come from far-flung lands - from North Africa and the Middle East, to southeast Asia and the Balkans - live in communal settings, with single adults sharing rooms with up to eight others of different backgrounds and nationalities. Some centres house only men, some only women. Many have no shared language and many have lived through extreme trauma, having fled torture, trafficking, and tragic conflict.

Before being granted such luxuries, those unlucky enough to find themselves at the mercy of this framework can spend up to six months in cramped city hotel rooms, where they must wait to receive a coveted temporary residence certificate, a lifeline without which asylum seekers cannot claim expenses or obtain a social security number. All they are left with is time.

Arguably unique in its psychological cruelty, Direct Provision prevents people from living in the community, thereby stripping them of their independence and any ability to integrate into Irish society. Until 2018, Direct Provision residents had no right to work. Even now, they must wait six months and that right remains limited.

There are currently 8,205 people - 2,658 of them children - in DP and emergency accommodation facilities across Ireland, according to the latest data. The average length of stay is 24 months, but some languish in the system for as long as 12 years.

The malevolent undertones of Direct Provision are more pronounced by the fact that big business is making bank on the existence of such a system. The majority of centres are managed by private, for-profit contractors on behalf of the State. Aramark, a US catering conglomerate that runs some of Ireland's most iconic cafes and turned over a cool $14.6bn in 2017, is one of them.

Years of criticism from international organisations and tireless activism from human rights groups including the Movement of Asylum Seekers in Ireland (MASI) has led to small-scale improvements, with asylum seekers now entitled to a driving licence, broader access to education, and a bank account in their own name.

The Irish government last year caved to pressure and pledged to end Direct Provision by 2024, but fears are now mounting that myopia regarding the plight of Ukrainians could scupper that goal.

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment sign up to our free weekly Voices newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

Just as the Dail granted Ukrainians the right to live and work as EU citizens in Ireland, the body of an elderly woman, believed to be from Zimbabwe, was found in a Cork Direct Provision centre. She had been dead for several days before anyone noticed.

Ireland expects to have welcomed 20,000 ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) into the State by the end of this month, which will be five weeks since Russia's invasion began. There they can work, study, and live just as any citizen of the Republic is entitled to live.

While there is no question that my homeland is doing right by the people of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , such support should be extended to every man, woman, and child fleeing war and persecution from every corner of the world. It should not be conditional on geography, geopolitics, or how "European" they may appear to be.

**Load-Date:** March 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'Kindness backpacks' bring 'moments of happiness' to young Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:658V-V2G1-DY4H-K0V5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 22, 2022 Friday 1:37 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 487 words

**Byline:** Alistair Mason

**Highlight:** Friends Stuart Thomas and Neil Spalding have been helping out with the project in Warsaw.

**Body**

Two [*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) friends have raised more than £4,000 to fund "kindness backpacks" given out to Ukrainian refugee children in Poland.

Stuart Thomas, 43, and Neil Spalding, 30, travelled earlier this month to help out at a humanitarian aid centre set up at the [*Warsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warsaw) Expo Centre in Poland's capital, where refugees stay briefly after leaving Ukraine before moving on to more permanent locations.

While there they were involved in putting together and distributing the so-called kindness backpacks, which were the brainchild of one of the women working at the centre, Marta Szyjkowska, and are designed to be both fun for the displace children as well as practical.

As most of those at the centre will undertake bus journeys of up to 40 hours to their next location, the bags contain things to keep them entertained on the trip like toys and games, as well as gifts from shops including Claire's Accessories and bars of chocolate.

The backpacks will also function as schoolbags when the children reach their next destination.

Mr Thomas, who works in business-to-business exhibitions, told the PA news agency: "Marta came up the idea that she wanted children, when they're leaving the relocation centres, to have a couple of things.

"She wanted them to have something to do on that bus journey, and she also wants them to feel a moment of kindness - the fact that people really cared about them."

Mr Thomas and Mr Spalding, from [*Clapton*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/clapton) in east [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london) , spent the first couple of days in Warsaw helping to put the bags together.

They were then given the job of handing out bags to youngsters leaving the centre - the first time they had visited where the refugees were sleeping.

Mr Thomas, from Stansted Mountfitchet, in Essex, said: "We turned the corner and I think in my life I've never just frozen by being so overwhelmed with emotion, because there's people who are just... uncontrollable tears, you know when people cry but uncontrollably?

"I've got two young boys, I've got boys that are 11 and eight, and so a couple of these boys got off the bus together and one of them, my lad plays football all the time and this lad obviously did as well, he's got all the [*Adidas*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/adidas) sports stuff on and I was like 'that's just my boy there'.

"So I think the first time, we found it exceptionally difficult and I'd say we're pretty useless actually."

During their week at the centre, Mr Thomas said the pair, who became friends through playing rugby and cricket together, helped to hand out between 400 and 500 bags.

But with stocks running low, they are now raising funds to be able to distribute more when they return to the centre next week.

Mr Thomas said the packs were "massively appreciated" by both the children who received them and their parents.

"We're not changing the world and I completely get that, but it's creating small moments of happiness," Mr Thomas added.

To donate, [*www.gofundme.com/f/kindness-backpacks-for-children-of-ukraine*](http://www.gofundme.com/f/kindness-backpacks-for-children-of-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** April 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Almost 30% of Ukrainian refugees arriving in to Ireland were under 14*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65J9-MV41-JBNF-W3TD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 27, 2022 Friday 1:05 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 441 words

**Byline:** Cate McCurry

**Highlight:** The highest percentage of those arriving, 43% equating to 14,271 people, were categorised as one parent with children.

**Body**

Almost 30% of Ukrainians arriving in to [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) were aged 14 or under, new figures show.

By the end of last week, there were 33,151 Personal Public Service Numbers (PPSNs) issued to refugees fleeing war-torn Ukraine under Ireland's Temporary Protection Directive.

The figures were released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO).

Women aged 20 and over account for 48% of arrivals to date, while individuals aged 0 to 19, both girls and boys, account for 38%.

There were 33,151 arrivals from Ukraine in Ireland by the week ending 22 May 2022, of which 29% were aged 14 or under[*https://t.co/W8rQbI3b2f*](https://t.co/W8rQbI3b2f) [*#CSOIreland*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/CSOIreland?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#Ireland*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Ireland?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#Population*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Population?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#Migration*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Migration?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#Ukraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Ukraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#Refugee*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Refugee?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/YOlPetClpQ*](https://t.co/YOlPetClpQ) - Central Statistics Office Ireland (@CSOIreland) [*May 27, 2022*](https://twitter.com/CSOIreland/status/1530127464101453827?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

The highest percentage of those arriving, 43% equating to 14,271 people, were categorised as one parent with children under the broad relationship classification headings.

Many of the spouses and partners stayed in Ukraine to fight for their country as many women and children left the country in their millions.

The Local Electoral Area (LEA) with the highest number of associated arrivals from Ukraine was north inner city in [*Dublin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dublin) with 1,156 individuals.

Statistician Karola Graupner said: "This arrivals from Ukraine in Ireland release is based on administrative data up to May 22 2022.

"It is the first publication by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) providing insights into Ireland's response to the Ukrainian crisis.

"This release includes an analysis of Ukrainian arrivals who are availing of support and services from the Department of Social Protection.

The LEA with the highest rate is Ennistimon in Clare while the LEA of Drogheda rural in Louth had the lowest rate in the country.

Karola Graupner

"Based on the local post office address as per the process through which refugees were seeking assistance from the department, we also show two maps in this release based on mapping 29,718 individuals, or 90% of arrivals, to a local post office.

"The first map is a count of arrivals by Local Electoral Area (LEA), and the second is the rate of arrivals by LEA, per 100 of the [*Census*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/census) 2016 population.

"Using the local post office address as a proxy for place of residence, arrivals from Ukraine are present in all LEAs and North Inner City in Dublin had the highest number of associated arrivals from Ukraine at 1,156.

"Our analysis also shows that the rate per 100 of the population ranges across all LEAs in the country from 0.03% to 6.81%.

"The LEA with the highest rate is Ennistimon in Clare, while the LEA of [*Drogheda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/drogheda) rural in [*Louth*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/louth) had the lowest rate in the country."

**Load-Date:** May 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*The polish nuns offering safety to Ukrainian refugees; Hope is to be found in the small village of Yazlovets on Easter Sunday as Ukrainians displaced by the war gather in search of comfort. Askold Krushelnycky is there to hear their stories*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BP6-DN61-F072-4358-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

April 1, 2024 Monday

First Edition

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**Section:** WORLD; Pg. 18

**Length:** 1119 words

**Byline:** ASKOLD KRUSHELNYCKY

**Body**

A celebration of Easter at a Roman Catholic convent run by Polish nuns in western Ukraine, which has sheltered hundreds of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** since the start of the war, has become a symbol of how the historically troubled relations between Poles and Ukrainians have been transformed.

On Easter Sunday, the church within the convent is crowded with parishioners - some of them refugees who are living here, and others from the surrounding area - for the Roman Catholic mass, said in Ukrainian by Polish and Ukrainian priests. Among the parishioners are Roman Catholics, Ukrainian Catholics, and members of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church - most of them refugees from eastern Ukraine.

Sister Julia, the most senior of the three nuns - two Polish, one Ukrainian - who run the convent, was born in Poland and has been in Yazlovets, the village that is home to the convent, since shortly after Ukraine became independent in 1991. She says: "There have been very difficult and painful moments in the history between Poles and Ukrainians, but if you can say that something good has come out of the nightmare of a war, then the profound bonds that have arisen between Ukraine and Poland are certainly among those positive things."

The convent occupies a building that was once the 18th-century palace of a Polish aristocratic family, who donated it in 1863 to the Roman Catholic Church. It is perched atop one of the rolling hills that circle Yazlovets, in western Ukraine's Ternopil region.

The handsome, sprawling building hints at the former magnificence of the village. In the 15th and 16th centuries its enterprising Ukrainian, Polish and Jewish populations - augmented in the 14th century by Armenians fleeing the Mongol hordes - made Yazlovets into a thriving village that for generations rivalled Lviv, some 100 miles to the northwest, as the principal city of the region.

In the First World War, the town (as it was then), part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, had the misfortune to be close to the border with the Russian empire, and was severely damaged by Russian artillery, which also scarred the convent and palace.

The Second World War further ravaged Yazlovets, which became part of Soviet Ukraine and was stripped of its status as a town and designated a village. During the war, Ukrainian and Polish guerrillas, both fighting the Nazi occupation, also took part in vicious ethnic cleansing against each other's communities in parts of western Ukraine, which has left memories of horrors that Moscow has long exploited to try to prevent the healing of old animosities.

Ironically, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, along with the huge support given by Poland, has produced the sort of rapprochement between the two nations that Moscow desperately wanted to scupper. Since the Russians first invaded Ukraine in 2014, the convent has cared for refugees fleeing the occupied areas. And since the full-blown February 2022 onslaught, Sister Julia says, some 200 people have stayed at the convent, though some only for a short time.

Currently some 33 refugees are permanently housed there - eight women and 25 children, who either attend local schools or have online lessons. Sister Julia says that in recognition of all the assistance the nuns have provided to refugees and the local community, the local authorities decided this weekend to hand over the former palace in its entirety to the convent.

Sister Julia says: "So many people and groups - religious and secular - from Poland, America, Germany, France, Spain, even Japan have provided assistance. Some come to repair and build, or chop the wood we need for heating. Others have delivered vehicles full of food, clothes, medicines. Some of that we have used, but this place has also served as a collection point for aid delivered from all over the world, and most of it has been sent on to the east, including to the soldiers at the front lines."

Nadia, 74, and her daughter Oksana, 54, who fled from their eastern Ukrainian city of Lysychansk in April 2022, were first evacuated to Lviv in western Ukraine and then given shelter in Poland, along with hundreds of thousands of other Ukrainians. After 10 months, they jumped at the chance to go to Yazlovets, arriving there in January 2023.

Nadia says: "I think that I first really felt the presence of God when so many strangers in Ukraine and Poland offered me a home, food, clothes when I and my daughter had nothing and no money. The nuns at Yazlovets do not try to press the Catholic faith on us, but all of us can see the strength of their faith and admire the work they have done to help others. In any case, there is one God, isn't there? And we attend the masses because they give us hope."

After Sunday mass, the nuns and the refugees eat a traditional Easter breakfast of smoked meats, boiled eggs, a sweet Easter bread and other delicacies blessed at a mass on Saturday, with friends in their rooms and later at a communal meal.

Six people from another refugee family share their meal in the room they all sleep in. Kateryna, 30, lives there with her four children, aged four to 13. Her husband, Mykola, was a volunteer soldier defending their native city of Kharkiv after the 2022 invasion, and was killed in battle against the Russians in March that year.

She, the children and her husband's mother were evacuated to Yazlovets soon after Mykola's death. She says: "I can't express how grateful we are for the peace and safety we have found here. We were all devastated and felt hopeless after the death of my husband. The nuns here have given us not only shelter but hope."

While her three eldest children attend online lessons, Kateryna busies herself making camouflage nets for Ukrainian frontline troops. The six of them eat their breakfast with a framed photograph of Mykola on the table.

Kateryna says: "The two eldest children were christened in the Ukrainian Orthodox faith, while the two youngest were christened as Roman Catholics here. I have no problems with that. Today we celebrate the resurrection by one calendar, and then we will mark Easter Orthodox on May 5."

Many Ukrainians were shocked when, in March, Pope Francis seemed to suggest that Ukraine should haul up the white flag of surrender to avoid more deaths.

Sister Julia says: "I know that the Pope cares deeply about Ukraine. I feel his words were misinterpreted and there might be people of ill will around him. I know he has sent much assistance here and he wants Ukraine to be free. As to Ukraine and Poland, I think that our two nations have much in common going a long way back in history, and share similar traits of deep faith and courage. I believe that the future and survival of Poland and Ukraine depend on both standing together."

**Load-Date:** March 31, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees celebrate UK Easter with traditional cakes and bike rides*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:657S-TMR1-JBNF-W015-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 17, 2022 Sunday 12:52 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 420 words

**Byline:** Lily Ford

**Highlight:** The family's plans include a bike ride in the countryside thanks to an offer of free hire from a local bicycle shop.

**Body**

A Ukrainian family and their British host are celebrating Easter with traditional cakes and countryside bike rides after a four-week wait for their visas.

Steve Dury, a local government officer from Langport, [*Somerset*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/somerset) , collected a family of five from Bristol airport on Tuesday after a month of waiting for the visa of three-year-old Egor Svichkar.

Liudmyla Tarasenko and her 15-year-old daughter Daria, Liudmyla's 27-year-old niece and Egor's mother, Yulia Svichkar, as well as 13-year-old Denys Chemodanov, have been "keen to cook Ukrainian dishes" and show Mr Dury their culture through family recipes.

"It's really, really nice to be exposed to Ukrainian culture, Ukrainian food and have interesting conversations with them," Mr Dury, 59, told the PA news agency.

"They have a traditional family recipe that's been passed down by their grandparents, a Napolyeon tort, a flaky, buttery puff pastry between sweet vanilla custard.

"So this afternoon, (Liudmyla) has promised to come and make this lovely cake as an Easter treat for us all. They're happy to be able to join in and do something to mark it."

Mr Dury was only able to accommodate the two mothers and three children from [*Kharkiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kharkiv) when his "desperate plea" led the Home Secretary's office to intervene and approve Egor's visa.

He wrote to Priti Patel's office on Sunday April 10 and received a reply the next day: "Please pass on our apologies to the family for the delays in processing Egor's visa application."

"Egor's visa was processed by caseworkers in [*Sheffield*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sheffield) over the weekend and an instruction has now been sent to [*Warsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warsaw) to print the visa."

The family were in Somerset by Tuesday evening.

Their Easter plans also include a bicycle ride in the countryside thanks to an offer from a local bike shop.

"We bumped into somebody who owns a bicycle shop in Langport and they said, 'Our Easter gift to you will be free hire of bicycles for a day from the shop'," Mr Dury said.

"So either this afternoon or tomorrow, we will spend a day just riding out on the bicycles. That's the generosity of one of the local people here in Langport."

Mr Dury and other local sponsors hosted a barbecue on Saturday to give refugees staying in the area a chance to meet and speak in Ukrainian.

Mr Dury added that three-year-old Egor has already made a friend in the family dog, [*Maya*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/maya).

"He's got a great sense of humour, he loves to laugh," he said.

"We've got a golden retriever. He absolutely adores the dog, the first thing he asks when he wakes up in the morning - 'Can I pet Maya?'"

**Load-Date:** April 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Scottish Greens demand more from Johnson and Patel to help Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6503-VMV1-DY4H-K23D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 12, 2022 Saturday 12:29 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 397 words

**Byline:** Katrine Bussey

**Highlight:** Co-leader Lorna Slater hit out at the UK Government for 'putting paperwork and bureaucracy ahead of people's lives'.

**Body**

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) and Home Secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) have been challenged to stop "putting paperwork and bureaucracy ahead of the people's lives" by making it easier for refugees from Ukraine to come to the UK.

The UK [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) has come under fire from the Scottish Government and First Minister [*Nicola Sturgeon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nicola-sturgeon) over its insistence that refugees must obtain visas before coming to Britain.

With more than two million people having fled Ukraine in the wake of the Russian invasion, Scottish Green minister Lorna Slater joined in the criticism.

Ms Slater argued that every day of "inaction" from Westminster on the issue would "make a terrible situation worse".

Let them in. No excuses, no obstacles, no delays. Let them in now

Scottish Greens co-leader Lorna Slater

Speaking at the Scottish Green Party conference in Stirling, the Scottish Green co-leader was clear: "My message to Boris Johnson and Priti Patel is to stop putting paperwork and bureaucracy ahead of the people's lives.

"Stop putting it ahead of women and children who are running terrified from the devastation of war.

"Let them in. No excuses, no obstacles, no delays. Let them in now."

Ms Slater said she wanted [*Scotland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scotland) to be "country that offers safety and security to people that need it".

Recalling the mass protest in Glasgow that was sparked after two Indian nationals were detained by Border Force officials in May last year, the Green said: "We can be the Scotland of Kenmure Street, not Downing Street."

She insisted: "We can build a fairer, greener and independent Scotland that stands proudly at the heart of Europe and offers safety and solidarity to refugees.

"We in Scotland want to stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

"We want to welcome those who need sanctuary into our homes, but instead our doors have been slammed shut by a UK Government that is singularly failing to step up to its humanitarian responsibilities."

Her comments came as fellow Green co-leader Patrick Harvie condemned the "shocking, traumatic and frightening" attack on Ukraine by the Russian regime, which had resulted in an "humanitarian crisis on a scale like nothing we have seen for generations".

Mr Harvie said: "Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine was a flagrant and grievous breach of international law and what we have seen happening since is truly horrific.

"We offer the people of Ukraine our support and our solidarity today."

**Load-Date:** March 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UK has 'fallen short' in response to Ukrainian refugees, says Nicola Sturgeon*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y9-0G81-DY4H-K2GR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 6:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 405 words

**Byline:** Katrine Bussey

**Highlight:** The First Minister said the Westminster Government had not done enough to help women and children fleeing the war-torn country.

**Body**

The [*UK Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk-government) has "fallen short" in its response to the refugees fleeing "horror" in Ukraine, [*Nicola Sturgeon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nicola-sturgeon) has insisted.

The [*Scottish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scottish) [*First Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/first-minister) has again pressed Westminster to do more to help those who are seeking safety in the wake of the Russian invasion.

She raised the issue in Holyrood in a debate to mark International Women's Day - noting that the "majority of those seeking refuge are women and children".

Home Office minister, [*Kevin Foster*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kevin-foster) , had earlier told the Commons that more than 500 visas have now been issued under the Ukraine Family Scheme, which launched on Friday - with more than 10,000 applications submitted.

The majority of those seeking refuge are women and children. So far, the UK's response has fallen short

Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister

Ms Sturgeon was clear in her view that "in the face of the horror engulfing Ukraine, words are not enough" as she again demanded the UK follow the example of Ireland and other European Union nations, who are allowing refugees to enter without having visas.

The First Minister said: "In the past 10 days alone, more than two million people have already fled the horrors of war, that number is rising rapidly.

"The majority of those seeking refuge are women and children. So far, the UK's response has fallen short.

"Today on International Women's Day, I appeal to the UK Government to follow the example of Ireland and other EU countries. Refuge and sanctuary first, bureaucracy second.

"Let people in and do the paperwork afterwards. Let's open, not just our hearts, but also our doors, our common humanity demands it."

Her comments came as she said that International Women's Day was an "an opportunity to show solidarity to women and girls across the globe, not least those on the front line of conflict and war".

Ms Sturgeon continued: "Ukraine is one of the countries across the world that marks International Women's Day with a public holiday. This time last year, thousands marched through the streets of its capital city, Kyiv, to demand gender equality.

"Today, the reality could not be more different. Kyiv and cities across Ukraine are under brutal Russian bombardment.

"Far from participating in peaceful democratic protest, Ukrainians are now fighting and fleeing for their lives.

"So today, from our national parliament here in Edinburgh, Kyiv's twin city, let us send the women and girls, men and boys of Ukraine our love, solidarity and support."

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*More than 20,000 Ukrainian refugees waiting for decisions on applications to join family in UK*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651D-BYN1-DY4H-K0M3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 18, 2022 Friday 4:36 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 857 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Minister admits he is 'not happy' with speed of visa processing as Ukrainians tell of delays

**Body**

More than 20,000 people who have fled the [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) war are waiting for decisions from the [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) on their applications to join family members in Britain, new figures show.

The UK's minister for refugees admitted that he was "not happy" with the speed at which applications were being processed under the Ukraine family scheme, which launched a fortnight ago, after it emerged that 6,500 visas have been issued out of the 27,000 applications submitted.

This leaves 20,500 [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) who have escaped from Ukraine waiting in other European countries on the continent, often without anyone they know and having to pay for accommodation or rely on charities to house and support them.

Britain's offer to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** has been widely criticised after it refused to introduce visa-free travel to those fleeing, instead introducing the family scheme a week after the start of the war allowing Ukrainians with relatives who are settled in the country to join them.

Refugees have struggled to navigate the scheme's application process, which has required many to travel to visa centres, sometimes located [*many miles away*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukrainian-refugees-visa-warsaw-rzeszow-uk-b2032259.html) , and forced some to [*wait for hours in the cold*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugees-poland-uk-visa-home-office-b2031118.html). The Home Office eased the requirements on Tuesday by allowing refugees with passports to apply online.

The Independent is raising money for the people of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) - if you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

[*Richard Harrington*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/richard-harrington) , the refugees minister -who was appointed to the role by Boris Johnson on 8 March 2022, told TimesRadio on Friday morning that he was "not happy" with the time it was taking for visa applications to be processed.

He said the government was making "significant progress" to speed up the processing times, as well as working to "abbreviate" the form applicants are required to fill in when they apply, saying the document is currently "long" but that a "shorter version" would be online later on Friday.

Ukrainians and their UK-based family members have told The Independent of the difficulties navigating the visa application process.

One UK resident Roxy Savchenko, 45, left her home in Cardiff on 2 March to meet her sister Daryna Savchenko, 32, and her 10-month-old baby Vladyslav in Warsaw after they fled from Ukraine.

She had expected to be able to return with them to the UK within a couple of days, but more than a fortnight later they remain on the continent, in Paris, deadline with a "ridiculous" visa process.

They struggled to book a visa appointment, but were finally able to attend one in Paris on Monday. Two days later, Daryna received a positive decision and was told she could pick her visa up from the centre.

However, despite initially being told that the baby could be included on Daryna's application, on Wednesday they received an email from the Home Office stating that Vladyslav needed a separate application.

They are now waiting to find out when they can secure an appointment at the visa centre to submit the 10-month-old's fingerprints and photographs.

Roxy, who suffers from chronic condition fibromyalgia, said: "It's bizarre that we're having to do a separate application for the baby. I've got a five-year-old son left at home. The lady who is looking after him is struggling. My sister is in quite a state herself. The baby is crying a lot."

Immigration barrister Colin Yeo criticised the government for only having issued 6,500 family visas, pointing out there over three million people have fled Ukrainian, "with more leaving all the time".

"We really, really need to waive visa requirements if we're going to help Ukrainians themselves and our neighbours with this crisis. If we do that, there will obviously be problems. Several thousand Ukrainians would arrive very quickly with more following," he said.

"But those problems would be no worse than what is already going on across Europe. We are not currently playing any meaningful part in this crisis at all."

A Home Office spokesperson said: "Valid passport holders no longer have to attend in-person appointments to submit fingerprints or facial verification, and we have also expanded capacity at our visa application centres to 13,000 appointments per week across Europe to help those without their documentation. Staff are working seven days-a-week to process applications as quicky as possible." .

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'Significant questions remain' over UK offer to Ukrainian refugees as loved ones still unable to reunite*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WT-C1F1-JBNF-W54F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 1, 2022 Tuesday 7:18 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 766 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Ministers warned of 'gaps and delays in system' and urged to go further by waiving visas for Ukrainians

**Body**

Ministers have been warned that "significant questions" remain about the humanitarian route for Ukrainians announced this week, as it emerged that many UK residents with loved ones who are fleeing the conflict are still unable to join them in Britain under the scheme.

The [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) announced on Tuesday that it was expanding the route to include parents, grandparents, adult children and siblings of British nationals and people settled in the UK, and that a new sponsorship scheme was being established to help people fleeing the Russia invasion.

Home secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) said the offer was in the "best interests" of [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) people and would see thousands of [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) welcomed to the UK, with normal requirements for salary or language tests waived.

However, the government has been warned that this still excludes swathes of refugees who would benefit from coming to the UK, such as partners or cousins of British nationals, or close relatives of people in the UK on work or study visas, who are not deemed to be "settled".

The Independent has spoken to UK residents who have said they are "disappointed" and "frustrated" after it emerged that they are still unable to bring their loved ones who have fled [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) to join them in Britain.

Lawyers and charities have also raised concern that there are likely to be delays in getting eligible people to the UK under the scheme, and called on ministers to temporarily introduce visa-free travel for Ukrainian nationals, in line with the approach taken in the EU, to prevent delays.

It comes as The Independent 's [*Refugees Welcome campaign*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/ukraine-war-russia-refugees-welcome-b2025033.html) called on the UK government to set up a resettlement scheme to give Ukrainians fleeing the invasion sanctuary in Britain.

Shadow immigration minister Yvette Cooper said there remained "significant questions" about "gaps in the system and delays", and that she remained concerned about whether this would deliver the "much needed support and sanctuary in practice".

"We need a simple commitment from the Home Office that family members fleeing war in Europe are all welcome here in the UK and that they won't be turned away just because their relative here is on a work or study visa rather than having permanent leave to remain, or if their relative is an aunt or uncle rather than a parent," she said.

"There also needs to be a fast way for those who are not family members to be able to get sanctuary here without waiting for the community sponsorship scheme, which has previously been slow and small in scale."

Immigration barrister Simon Cox, who has been supporting a number of Ukrainian nationals trying to join family in the UK, said the scheme announced on Tuesday had not yet been implemented, meaning most eligible people cannot yet benefit from it and may have to wait weeks before they can come to Britain.

"The Home Office should've started developing this scheme earlier. It has all the appearance of having been created today or yesterday afternoon. They're making policy on the hoof," he told The Independent.

"To get the policy up and running, they need to make it available on the website. They will then have to process these applications individually. During this time these people will need to have somewhere to stay elsewhere in Europe.

"If the government isn't careful, if it doesn't move quickly enough, there will be people waiting for weeks, running out of money, without a place to stay."

Mr Cox said one way of avoiding these risks would be to allow visa free entry to Britain for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, adding: "There's no reason why security checks can't be done in the UK. It would be much simpler. They're done on visa free nationals all the time."

Mike Adamson, chief executive at British Red Cross, said the announcement was welcomed, but expressed concern that it would take "some time to put this into practice", and echoed the calls for visa-free travel for Ukrainian nationals.

Caroline Coombs, of non-profit organisation Reunite Families UK, which has been supporting people trying to bring their Ukrainian loved ones to Britain, said it "spoke volumes" that the latest announcement on family visas came after "huge public outcry across social media".

"While we very welcome the latest amendment, we believe the Home Office must go further waiving visas for Ukrainian nationals needing sanctuary. If Ireland can open their doors and show truly decent humanity, why can't we?" she added.

It comes after a poll by YouGov last week found almost two-thirds of [*British people would support the introduction of a resettlement scheme*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-war-refugees-uk-resettlement-b2023549.html) for those fleeing Ukraine.

**Load-Date:** March 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Empty military homes must be option to house Ukrainian refugees, says Sturgeon*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6545-TPW1-DY4H-K4C3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 31, 2022 Thursday 4:01 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 430 words

**Byline:** Craig Paton

**Highlight:** The First Minister backed up a call by MSP Gordon MacDonald for empty MoD housing to be considered.

**Body**

Military homes that are currently lying empty could help give "true sanctuary" to Ukrainians fleeing the war in their homeland, [*Nicola Sturgeon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nicola-sturgeon) has said.

The Scottish [*First Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/first-minister) said the option of housing refugees from the war in vacant military properties owned by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) "must" be considered.

Speaking in the Scottish Parliament she said: "The humanitarian crisis here and the scale of it means it is important that all housing options are fully explored.

"I believe [*MoD*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mod) housing should be, must be, considered as part of this process."

She was asked about the issue by SNP MSP, Gordon MacDonald, who has already written to the Defence Secretary, [*Ben Wallace*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ben-wallace) , urging him to bring some 11,000 MoD homes that are not currently occupied, back into use.

The Edinburgh Pentland MSP said: "In my constituency, around the Dreghorn and Redford barracks, there are many MoD family homes that have been left empty for many years."

And he asked the First Minister to support his call for the "[*UK Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk-government) to consider the use of hundreds of empty MoD homes in Edinburgh and across Scotland to house people being displaced as a result of Russia's war in Ukraine".

Ms Sturgeon said while the UK Government has sole responsibility for MoD properties, she would welcome "making empty homes available to support displaced people from Ukraine".

We manage up to 16,000 service family moves every year, we need to retain vacant homes across the UK, but we are looking at what we can do around this

MoD spokesman

Speaking at First Minister's Questions, she added: "The Scottish Government is already bringing together key partners to ensure effective co-ordination of plans to address the accommodation needs of people who are settling in Scotland, so we are committed to working with all partners to ensure all arrangements in place are safe, sustainable and offer true sanctuary for those fleeing the war."

In his letter to the Defence Secretary, Mr MacDonald said that" it would be a failure of the Ministry of Defence not to utilise these properties to provide a safe, warm home for displaced Ukrainian people".

He urged the UK Government to "take this forward as a priority, working with the Scottish Government and the local authorities".

An MoD spokesman said: "The UK Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme has seen an unprecedented surge of public support, with sponsorship offers from across all four nations of the UK.

"As we manage up to 16,000 service family moves every year, we need to retain vacant homes across the UK, but we are looking at what we can do around this."

**Load-Date:** March 31, 2022

**End of Document**



[*More than 800 Ukrainian refugees waiting since March to come to UK - hosts*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:659G-X951-DY4H-K123-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 25, 2022 Monday 2:42 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:3

**Length:** 977 words

**Byline:** Jemma Crew

**Highlight:** Frustrated hosts say more than 800 refugees who applied during the first two weeks of the Homes for Ukraine scheme are still waiting for visas.

**Body**

More than 800 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have been waiting since March to come to the UK under the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine scheme, according to would-be sponsors.

British hosts frustrated by delays have compiled a spreadsheet detailing how many refugees are waiting since the sponsorship scheme opened on March 18.

It shows that visa applications for at least 622 Ukrainians, sponsored by 310 UK hosts, are still outstanding after being made during the first week.

A further 261 refugees, sponsored by 130 [*Britons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britons) , are waiting for a decision on applications made during the second week of the scheme.

Something must have happened, it doesn't make logical sense to me

Louise Marcinkevice

And 128 Ukrainians who applied under the scheme, sponsored by 43 hosts, after April 1 are still waiting.

The data is not exhaustive and is likely to be an underestimate of the true numbers waiting since March, organisers believe.

Official figures show that there have been 65,900 applications under the sponsorship scheme since last Wednesday, with 39,300 visas issued.

As of last Monday, 6,600 refugees had arrived in the UK under the scheme (17% of those with visas).

There has been widespread concern about the length of time it is taking for people to reach safety under this route, with multiple examples of family members' visas coming through at different times, despite them applying on the same day.

Louise Marcinkevice, who helped compile the spreadsheet, said the delays are "incredibly frustrating", especially as she has heard of people who applied early on making second applications which have then been approved within several days.

The 36-year-old from Cleethorpes, Lincolnshire, said she has offered to take unpaid leave and help [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) officials address the backlog but has received no response.

She is sponsoring a mother and daughter who are in [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) and told the PA news agency: "We are still waiting for two outstanding applications, we applied within the very first hour.

"Something must have happened, it doesn't make logical sense to me."

Several community groups of would-be sponsors will be protesting outside the Houses of Parliament on Monday afternoon, before meeting MPs.

Marlow Ukraine Collective, which is joining the protests, comprises of 45 host families who are sponsoring 123 Ukrainians, including 56 children.

Only 19 visas had been granted as of Friday.

They said the process is "causing untold stress to host families and Ukrainians".

Debbie Farnfield, from Marlow, [*Buckinghamshire*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/buckinghamshire) , has been waiting for visas since late March for the family of five she is sponsoring, and will be joining the protest.

The parents and two children were told last week they can go to Warsaw in Poland to collect their permission to travel documents, but nothing has come through for the third child, a five-year-old boy.

The 68-year-old said she feels "very, very angry and frustrated for them".

I am now ashamed to be British because of the way we are treating people

Kate Clarkson

Asked if she has heard of other cases where visas for children have not arrived, she said: "It's almost seems to be like a policy... we are hearing this again and again, it's so frustrating."

Kate Clarkson, a Manchester-based nurse who was retired but returned to work during the pandemic, helped a mother and daughter in Poland apply for visas more than a month ago.

The 42-year-old mother she is sponsoring has received her visa but her 21-month-old daughter is still waiting.

While in a refugee camp in Warsaw the pair caught rotavirus, and the toddler became so unwell she had to go to hospital.

Calling the process "an absolute nightmare", the 68-year-old said: "I'm absolutely ashamed.

"I am now ashamed to be British because of the way we are treating people."

She said of the mother: "She feels as if she is being made to beg just to stay alive. It's an awful feeling."

Rebecca Lewis described the system for those who want to provide a temporary home to Ukrainians as "incredibly frustrating".

She said: "It is a crying shame that all this generosity (from people in England) is being wasted in a bureaucratic swamp."

Ms Lewis is among campaigners who went to the House of Commons on Monday to tell their local MPs that the visa application process needs to be simplified. The government needs to hold its commercial partner to account to ensure the system is efficient, they add.

Ms Lewis, a 44 year-old teacher of Marlow, Buckinghamshire, is sponsoring Mariia, 38, and her children Vladyslav, four, and Sofia, five, while their father Oleksandr is in Ukraine fighting on the front line.

The mother's visa arrived on April 9 and, in desperation, after having waited more than 33 days for the children's visas to come, Ms Lewis contacted an immigration lawyer. It was only after a lawyer became involved over the "intolerable confusion and delay" that the visa's came through to the family who were then staying in Athens, she said.

Ms Lewis believes the system is so slow that people's health is being damaged and job opportunities are being squandered.

She added: "We have got people sitting in shelters in Kyiv frantically checking their emails to see if their visas have landed. There was a case of two babies who were sleeping in a Polish Tube station in temperatures of minus 8C waiting for their visas.

"We need the Government to slash the red tape so that the truly generous spirit of the British people can come through."

A Government spokesman said: "Thanks to the generosity of the public who have offered their homes to Ukrainians fleeing the war and through the Ukraine Family Scheme, more than 71,800 visas have been granted with 21,600 Ukrainians arriving safely in the UK.

"The Home Office is now processing thousands of visas a day. This shows the changes made to streamline the service are working and we'll continue to build on this success so we can speed up the process even further."

**Load-Date:** April 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[*The people have spoken: Britain must welcome Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X4-RK81-F072-43PV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 3, 2022 Thursday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 2

**Length:** 677 words

**Byline:** EDITORIAL

**Body**

The standing ovation given by the House of Commons to the Ukrainian ambassador, Vadym Prystaiko, was a historic moment, a moving one, and an important one. For a nation in mortal danger, every gesture of solidarity may provide some comfort. Yet as the questions to the prime minister that followed illustrate, much more can, and should, be done to support the people of Ukraine as they struggle against a barbaric invader.

The Independent's Refugees Welcome campaign shows that the British public is big-hearted and generous towards defenceless people in obvious need. The public would surely support the government following the lead of the European Union and immediately introducing a special fast-track three-year visa for Ukrainians fleeing war - and it is, in any case, a moral imperative and a legal one under the UN convention on refugees.

So it should be implemented forthwith. Boris Johnson tries to argue that the UK cannot do that because the EU operates the Schengen open borders system, but it isn't obvious what relevance that has for post-Brexit Britain. Home secretary Priti Patel warns about hostile agents, but makes it sound like an excuse. If taking control of our borders means anything, it should mean the right to offer shelter to those in need. A way can be found safely and quickly.

Targeted Russian attacks on civilian buildings have apparently already begun, and before long Ukraine's major cities will find themselves encircled, awaiting a siege or being wiped from the face of the earth, as was Grozny before them. A humanitarian disaster is looming, and the public demand for something to be done will become a clamour. Something will certainly have to be done.

The Ukrainian government has requested the Pope intervenes with Vladimir Putin to establish safe ground corridors for the wounded, refugees and humanitarian supplies such as medicine and clean water. The British government should support the initiative, and continue to provide such aid as well as military assistance, and to make arrangements for charities and agencies to deliver what the British public are generously sending to the region, both in Ukraine and in neighbouring nations.

So-called no-fly zones are also an obvious way to help save lives in such a situation as this, but they risk provoking a wider war, as might any aerial airlift of humanitarian aid to Kyiv and Kharkiv or naval supplies to Odesa. If Russian forces challenge Nato forces or western civilian vessels or aircraft, then escalation could easily follow. President Putin's threats to use nuclear weaponry have to be taken seriously. Yet they might be a bluff, and for now the better way is to supply Ukraine with anti-aircraft systems. But pressure for no-fly zones will intensify as the strangling of Kyiv proceeds to its grisly conclusion.

As the opposition parties and Conservative backbenchers argue, and the government partially concedes, much more could also be done to tighten economic sanctions and those on certain named individuals, cronies of Putin, with substantial interests in London. The opposition has offered to work with the government to close the loopholes and stop the laundering of dirty money in a matter of days through the economic crimes bill. There are other measures that might help law firms bullying journalists and MPs who are trying to highlight the more egregious abuses of British hospitality. Chris Bryant (Labour,) and Bob Seely (Conservative) are rightly speaking out under parliamentary privilege to expose what has been going on, and they deserve to be listened to, and their warnings acted on.

With the right assistance, many civilian lives can be saved in the coming days. Bolder moves, and riskier ones, will be needed if the west is serious about helping the Ukrainians win this unequal war and turn back the invaders. Unprecedented economic war will be required, with the broadest possible coalition of nations. Yet the fact remains that only the Russian people can stop President Putin from menacing his neighbours and threatening the peace of the world.

**Load-Date:** March 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*The people have spoken: Britain must welcome Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X4-RK81-F072-43RV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 3, 2022 Thursday

Second Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 2

**Length:** 675 words

**Byline:** EDITORIAL

**Body**

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So-called no-fly zones are also an obvious way to help save lives in such a situation as this, but they risk provoking a wider war, as might any aerial airlift of humanitarian aid to Kyiv and Kharkiv or naval supplies to Odesa. If Russian forces challenge Nato forces or western civilian vessels or aircraft, then escalation could easily follow. President Putin's threats to use nuclear weaponry have to be taken seriously. Yet they might be a bluff, and for now the better way is to supply Ukraine with anti-aircraft systems. But pressure for no-fly zones will intensify as the strangling of Kyiv proceeds to its grisly conclusion.

As the opposition parties and Conservative backbenchers argue, and the government partially concedes, much more could also be done to tighten economic sanctions on certain named individuals, cronies of Mr Putin, with substantial interests in London. The opposition has offered to work with the government to close the loopholes and stop the laundering of dirty money in a matter of days through the economic crimes bill. There are other measures that might help law firms bullying journalists and MPs who are trying to highlight the more egregious abuses of British hospitality. Chris Bryant (Labour) and Bob Seely (Conservative) are rightly speaking out under parliamentary privilege to expose what has been going on, and they deserve to be listened to, and their warnings acted on.

With the right assistance, many civilian lives can be saved in the coming days. Bolder moves, and riskier ones, will be needed if the west is serious about helping the Ukrainians win this unequal war and turn back the invaders. Unprecedented economic war will be required, with the broadest possible coalition of nations. Yet the fact remains that only the Russian people can stop President Putin from menacing his neighbours and threatening the peace of the world.

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Many Ukrainian refugees struggling to find work in UK, survey suggests*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:667R-0DM1-DY4H-K3K9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 26, 2022 Friday 12:58 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 656 words

**Byline:** Flora Thompson

**Highlight:** The findings of the Office for National Statistics research was published on Friday.

**Body**

Many Ukrainians who have come to the UK are struggling to find work because their qualifications are not recognised and due to language difficulties, a survey suggests.

Most who have fled the war in their homeland to come to Britain do not know how to access benefits or alter their visas now they have arrived, the findings also indicate, as well as revealing how some feel nervous, anxious or depressed.

Experimental research by the [*Office for National Statistics*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/office-for-national-statistics) (ONS) questioned a sample of adults who had arrived in the UK by mid-April under Ukraine visa schemes.

Some 1,132 people took part in the online survey between July 20 and August 4, which was a follow-up questionnaire to the first of its kind carried out earlier this year.

The majority of respondents (93%) were still in the UK but 7% had left since April and the results were based on those who remained in the country at the time of the latest survey.

Hugh Stickland, from the ONS, said: “More Ukrainian nationals have now had time to find work since they first arrived in the UK.

“However, while a majority of those that aren’t working said they are likely or very likely to look for work, many are struggling to find work due to their qualifications gained abroad not being recognised by UK employers or who are struggling with the [*English*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/english) language requirements.”

The proportion of Ukrainian nationals employed in the UK has increased to 42% since the first survey and more respondents than before (37%) said they had enough money to support themselves for the next three months.

But almost half of the people who took part in the survey (47%) had “experienced some barriers to being able to take up work in the UK”, with the most common reason being because English language skills were not meeting the job requirements (58%).

Over half (51%) of respondents, however, indicated they could speak English well or very well. For reading and writing, this was 63% and 51%, respectively.

Of those with a qualification gained outside the UK, 43% indicated that UK employers had generally not recognised their qualifications when applying for jobs.

According to the findings, most respondents said they did not understand very well or at all well how to apply to extend or change their visa (69%), or what state benefits they may be eligible for (58%).

We've published results from the latest Humanitarian Response Insight Survey [*https://t.co/hlKbXqouG7*](https://t.co/hlKbXqouG7) This survey follows-up Ukrainian nationals settling in the UK who completed our first survey during April 2022. [*pic.twitter.com/iz5KgClpk7*](https://t.co/iz5KgClpk7) — Office for National Statistics (ONS) (@ONS) [*August 26, 2022*](https://twitter.com/ONS/status/1563082182079684609?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Around one in five (21%) respondents reported feeling nervous, anxious or on edge for more than half the days or nearly every day in the fortnight before filling out the survey.

Some 16% reported feeling down, depressed or hopeless for more than half the days or nearly every day in that period.

The [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) launched two visa schemes in March so those fleeing the conflict in Ukraine could come to the UK for up to three years.

The family scheme allows Ukrainian nationals and their relatives to join other family already living in the UK, while [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine allows Ukrainian nationals and their relatives to come to the UK if they have a sponsor who can provide accommodation.

Almost half (47%) of those who took part in the survey said they thought they would stay in the UK for at least a year, with 28% intending to stay for at least three years.

The ONS carried out the second UK Humanitarian Response Insight Survey in a bid to “understand the opinions and experiences of those arriving in the UK” under the schemes, but said “care needs to be taken” when interpreting the findings.

Some 118,000 people had arrived in the UK under the Ukraine visa schemes as of Monday, according to Government figures.

By Tuesday, around 208,500 applications had been submitted and 179,000 visas had been granted.

**Load-Date:** August 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Britons to be asked to house Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YV-X2J1-JBNF-W1WH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 11, 2022 Friday 6:55 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 775 words

**Byline:** Gavin Cordon

**Highlight:** Levelling Up Secretary Michael Gove will set out on Monday details of a new 'sponsored' humanitarian route to the UK.

**Body**

The [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) will ask the British public to open their homes to Ukrainians fleeing the fighting in their country amid continuing criticism of its response to the refugee crisis.

Levelling Up Secretary [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) will set out on Monday details of a new "sponsored" humanitarian route to allow Ukrainians without family links to the UK to come to the country.

The Daily Telegraph reported that ministers will unveil a hotline and webpage where individuals, charities, businesses and community groups will be able to offer rooms to those escaping the conflict.

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) told Sky News: "On Monday, you'll get from the Levelling Up Secretary, you'll get the programme that will allow people to come in, so (if) people want to welcome (refugees) into their own homes, they can do so."

Refugees who enter through the new route will be allowed to stay for an initial period of 12 months during which they will be entitled to work, claim benefits and access public services.

Officials will match them with offers of free accommodation from the sponsoring individuals and organisations who will be vetted to ensure it is safe and secure.

The Telegraph said those offering housing would have to agree to take the refugees for a minimum period - potentially six months - and demonstrate that they meet appropriate standards.

A Government spokesman said the details of the scheme were being worked on "at pace".

"The routes we have put in place follow extensive engagement with Ukrainian partners," the spokesman said.

"This is a rapidly moving and complex picture and as the situation develops we will continue to keep our support under constant review."

The move comes after Home Secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) was urged to do more to make it easier for those coming to the UK through the existing family route.

On Thursday, Ms Patel announced that from Tuesday people will be able to apply online for a visa and will no longer have to go to a processing centre to give their biometrics.

It followed criticism that the UK's response has been painfully slow in the face of the biggest refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War with around 2.2 million having fled the country.

However the British Red Cross said the quickest way of fixing the problem would be to remove the requirement for a visa, while the Refugee Council said Ms Patel's announcement "does not go anywhere near far enough".

Meanwhile, after the Government announced it was sanctioning seven more Russians linked to Vladimir Putin's regime including Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said the UK and other allies need to keep up the pressure with further measures - including a freeze on all Russian banking assets.

"We must double down and ramp up the global pressure on Putin. We must go further on sanctions to keep tightening the vice," she said in a speech in Washington.

"We want a situation where they can't access their funds, they can't clear their payments, their trade can't flow, their ships can't dock and their planes can't land."

Her call came as Mr Johnson warned that the "cynical, barbaric" Russian regime appeared to be preparing to use chemical weapons in Ukraine as its forces continued to struggle to make the expected gains in the face of fierce resistance.

"The stuff which your are hearing about chemical weapons is straight out of the Russian playbook," he told Sky News.

"They start saying that there are chemical weapons that are being stored by their opponents or by the Americans, so that when they themselves deploy chemical weapons - as I fear they may - they have a sort of a maskirovka, a fake story, ready to go."

Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine -11 March 2022Find out more about the UK government's response: [*https://t.co/9SIvyYxJxe*](https://t.co/9SIvyYxJxe) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/6agVnIHuZn*](https://t.co/6agVnIHuZn) - Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*March 11, 2022*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1502161078125355013?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

It comes as the Ministry of Defence (MoD) warned Russia could be re-posturing for a "renewed offensive" in Ukraine.

"This will probably include operations against the capital Kyiv," a [*MoD*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mod) statement said.

Earlier, the MoD said the Russian forces were committing increasing numbers to encircling key cities, reducing the forces to continue their advance which "will further slow Russian progress".

Mr Johnson said that he believed the conflict would only end when Mr Putin accepted he had made "a disastrous miscalculation" and withdrew his forces.

"Vladimir Putin has himself made it very difficult to find an off ramp, and he has, I think, driven his tank, so to speak, down a cul de sac from which it will be very hard to extricate himself but he must," he said.

**Load-Date:** March 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Meet the Ukrainian refugees building new lives after fleeing horrors of Russia's war*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6551-1D21-JBNF-W3VC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 4, 2022 Monday 12:16 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1041 words

**Byline:** Monika Scislowska and Stephen McGrath

**Highlight:** Having escaped from Russian shelling, ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are now focused on building new lives - temporarily or permanently

**Body**

Nataliya Hibska quickly brushes her teeth and makes the bed. She is rushing to her new job.

From a small hostel room in eastern Warsaw, Hibska, a Ukrainian refugee, is slowly rebuilding her life, which was abruptly upended by [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's invasion of her homeland.

European Union member nations like [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) and [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) - the two neighbouring countries to have received the most [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) - have launched programs to help them integrate.

The 47-year-old former manager of a private education centre from Kharkiv, in eastern Ukraine, Hibska fled her hometown after a second wave of shelling.

When bombs struck a nearby military warehouse, rattling her home, she knew it was time to leave and seek refuge for herself and her 11-year-old son.

"We were afraid to go out, to let them go out into the yard, we were afraid to let them ride bicycles or play football.

"We were just so scared and we decided that that was enough. It was time to flee," she said, describing the decision she and many of her neighbours were forced to take.

With only some basic belongings they embarked on what became a challenging five-day journey to the safety of Poland.

Three weeks on, and by a combination of help extended by ordinary people in Poland and policies put in place at the national and municipal level, Hibska and her son are starting to feel safe.

They have a simple yet welcoming home. Her son is enrolled at a local school, and she has started a new job as cook at a Ukrainian food bar launched specially to provide employment to refugees.

The workday starts early with food preparation ahead of the lunchtime rush.

Hibska and the five other Ukrainian women working here, all recently arrived refugees, roll out dough and chop fillings for traditional Ukrainian dumplings, pelmeni, that are a staple.

"I used to have five people working for me and I organised (youth) camps," she said, reflecting on her past life in Kharkiv. "I am not embarrassed by the fact that currently I am working in a kitchen."

Warsaw city authorities say work helps refugees integrate but is also filling vacancies in the health sector and in education, where special classes are being launched to assist newly arrived Ukrainian children.

Of the more than 4 million refugees that have fled Ukraine, over 2.4 million have crossed into Poland. While many have travelled onward throughout Europe, plenty have stayed in Poland which is offering free temporary accommodation, medical care, education and some social benefits. Some 625,000 refugees have sought and obtained Polish ID numbers entitling them to all that for 18 months.

But living off benefits was not something Nataliya would accept for too long.

"Volunteers help us with everything. We can live off Poland, but I don't see that as a good thing," she said. " I need to work. You won't get much doing nothing."

Her new job helps provide for her and her son, Roman, and anything left over she hopes to send to her parents and husband, still living in Kharkiv.

Her good fortune in Poland was thanks to a free hostel run by a family of developers and hotel owners. The same company launched a Ukrainian food bar specifically to provide [*jobs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jobs) to refugees.

The place opened 10 days ago and is quickly gaining in fame, with customers intent on helping Ukrainians all the while enjoying a good meal.

"The forms of help are evolving" said Karolina Samulowska awaiting her order. "At first there was aid, sandwiches, railway stations."

Now, at the bar "on the one hand the products are here and promote the country, on the other hand the money moves on, giving meaning to the refugees' lives."

As a regular flow of customers comes by to pick up lunch, the restaurant's manager, Dorota Wereszczynska, reflects on the success.

"We were not expecting such popularity," she said. "Our motto is "You buy. You eat. You help."

Further south on Europe's map, Romania has taken in more than 600,000 refugees from Ukraine.

Flavia Boghiu, the deputy mayor of the central city of Brasov, says the key to integration is to help people be "as autonomous as possible."

The city's refugee centres offer support and information on work offers, kindergartens and other activities, she told the AP, and local authorities proudly boast that of 1,200 refugees who arrived in the city, more than 75 per cent want to stay.

The employment process is "much slower than normal, because most of them don't have paperwork with them. Also you need to discuss with them to understand their particular situation. If you have a mother with three children you need to see what you're going to do with the children (while) she's at work," Boghiu said.

Four generations of Anastasia Yevdokimova's family fled from their homes near the Black Sea. The 21-year-old beauty industry worker came to Brasov with her grandmother, her mother and her 3-year-old son.

Brasov drew them with its impressive architecture and access to nature "which helps to distract from the circumstances," Yevdokimova said.

They've already had to seek urgent medical care for the child and found it to be quick and attentive. That reassured them.

Another refugee, 27-year-old Karina Buiukli, a human resources manager from the Black Sea port city of Odesa, and her family have been offered free accommodation with a Brasov couple, but were not expecting the great kindness they have met with.

"Our hosts, the owners of this apartment, are so kind and now we're just like friends," Buiukli said. "They showed us the town, they asked us to their house, it seems like we've know each other for a long (time)."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** April 4, 2022

**End of Document**



[*More than 200,000 arrivals to UK under Ukraine visa schemes*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BBF-01C1-JBNF-W2F8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 15, 2024 Thursday 9:58 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 273 words

**Byline:** Aine Fox

**Highlight:** People across the UK were encouraged to open their homes to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** when Russian March 2022.

**Body**

The number of visa holders arriving into the UK having fled the war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has topped 200,000.

The milestone was reached almost two years after the Russian invasion in February 2022 prompted Ukrainians to flee their home country for safety in other nations.

The latest figures, published by the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) , showed that as of February 12, there had been 200,200 arrivals under visa schemes.

There have been 143,400 under the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine scheme, and 56,800 under the Ukraine Family Scheme.

The Government must provide reassurance that Ukrainians will have the protection they need. This should include a long-term visa extension, along with support for integration and help for people to reunite with their families

British Red Cross

[*People*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/people) across the UK were encouraged to open their homes to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in March 2022, with Housing Secretary [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) referencing the UK’s “long and proud history of helping others in their hour of need”.

He described the Homes for Ukraine scheme at the time as offering “a lifeline to those who have been forced to flee” the invasion.

The scheme, also known as the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme, allows Ukrainian nationals and their family members to come to the UK if they have a named sponsor.

The Ukraine Family Scheme allows applicants to join family members or extend their stay in the UK, while an extension scheme is also in place for Ukrainian nationals and their immediate family members to apply for permission to stay in the UK.

A total of 31,400 applications to extend permission to stay under the Ukraine Family Scheme and Ukraine Extension Scheme had been granted as of February 13.

**Load-Date:** February 15, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees at Polish border returning to come home despite risks -including women and children*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651T-K601-JBNF-W2H7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 20, 2022 Sunday 11:54 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:4

**Length:** 439 words

**Byline:** Zaina Alibhai

**Highlight:** More than three million people have left Ukraine since Putin launched his invasion

**Body**

The war in Ukraine has seen millions of people forced to flee their homes for safety in neighbouring countries.

However, at the Polish border with Ukraine reports are emerging of many, including women and children, returning to Ukraine despite the risks.

One couple had been on holiday when the invasion happened and were returning to be with family who had stayed put, Sky News reports.

Another woman, Valentina Puzanova, said she travelled to Poland to take her elderly mother and young son to safety, and was heading back to be with her husband.

And the Bilechenko family, including a mother, father and their four children, said they are heading back after two weeks in Poland as the draw to be home "outweighs the risk".

The United Nations estimates that since Russian troops first entered Ukraine on 24 February, 3,270,662 have left the country, the majority of whom have gone to Poland. Ninety per cent of them are women and children.

The Kyiv Independent estimates more than 320,000 Ukrainians have returned since the beginning of the war, most of whom were men who wanted to defend their country.

The UN has warned that humanitarian needs are becoming ever-more urgent, with 200,000 people now without access to water across Donetsk and 100,000 people with no electricity in Luhansk, due to heavy shelling.

Residents in Mariupol and Sumy are facing a critical shortage of food, water and medicine, while in Odessa authorities have appealed for support for the 450,000 people in the city.

Ukraine's deputy prime minister Iryna Vereshchuk said seven humanitarian corridors would open on Sunday to enable civilians to leave frontline areas.

The UN estimates at least 847 civilians have been killed and 1,399 wounded as of Friday, with the Ukrainian prosecutor general's office claiming 112 children to have been killed.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Celebrities star in TV and radio appeal to help Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X7-96N1-JBNF-W0CX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 3, 2022 Thursday 7:56 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 616 words

**Byline:** Ellie Iorizzo

**Highlight:** The Disasters Emergency Committee has launched a fundraiser to help Ukrainians fleeing the country.

**Body**

Actors [*Kit Harington*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kit-harington) , [*David Tennant*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/david-tennant) and [*Adrian Lester*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/adrian-lester) will appear on TV and radio channels supporting an urgent Ukraine humanitarian campaign launched on Thursday.

The Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) launched the appeal to raise funds to help people fleeing the conflict after Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) launched an invasion a week ago.

Trigger Point star Lester, 53, appeared in a film which aired on the [*BBC*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bbc) following its news programme on Thursday evening.

Leaving everything behind, people are fleeing conflict in Ukraine. They need shelter, food and water. [*@DecAppeal*](https://twitter.com/decappeal?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) member charities are appealing for funds to help those in need. [*pic.twitter.com/f068N9fVd9*](https://t.co/f068N9fVd9) - BBC (@BBC) [*March 3, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BBC/status/1499461238069370890?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) In the appeal, he said: "Its been a horrific week for the people of Ukraine."We have watched on our screens the air strikes, shelling and bombardment take their toll on men, women and children."People are queueing at borders, hungry, exhausted, often separated from loved ones, many bring only what they can carry and are unequipped to face freezing temperatures."Others still in Ukraine have had to leave home to take shelter from the bombardment, living under curfew with little chance to buy food or get cash."Many homes are now destroyed or unsafe to live in. It is estimated if this situation continues more than seven million Ukrainians could be displaced.The Disasters Emergency Committee has launched an urgent appeal to help people fleeing conflict in Ukraine. [*#UkraineAppeal*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/UkraineAppeal?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The UK Government will match pound-for-pound up to £20 million donated by the public to this appeal. [*#UKAidMatch*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/UKAidMatch?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Donate now: [*https://t.co/JRCP8NYvdB*](https://t.co/JRCP8NYvdB) [*pic.twitter.com/APlGs0TJuc*](https://t.co/APlGs0TJuc) - DEC (@decappeal) [*March 3, 2022*](https://twitter.com/decappeal/status/1499308618608431104?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) "It is easy to feel powerless in the face of so much catastrophic human need, but you can help."Lester added that many of the charities involved in the DEC were already working in Ukraine or neighbouring countries, "preparing to scale up their operations."Harington, best known for playing Jon Snow in HBO fantasy series Games Of Thrones, will also appear on ITV, Channel 4, Channel 5 and Sky supporting the campaign.Tennant, 50, who played Doctor Who between 2005 and 2010, will be voicing an appeal which will be broadcast on the radio.As violence continues to rage across Ukraine, more than one million people have left their homes and sought refuge in neighbouring European Countries, according to the latest figures from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).Many thanks to Her Majesty The Queen for continuing to support the Disasters Emergency Committee and for making a generous donation to the DEC Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal. [*@RoyalFamily*](https://twitter.com/RoyalFamily?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#UkraineAppeal*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/UkraineAppeal?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) - DEC (@decappeal) [*March 3, 2022*](https://twitter.com/decappeal/status/1499431223969595392?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

UNHCR spokeswoman Shabia Mantoo this week predicted it would be the "biggest refugee crisis this century" as people continued to cross borders into Poland, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Moldova.

The joint fundraising appeal brings together 15 UK aid charities to help raise funds which will be distributed to charities responding on the ground, providing people with food, water and shelter.

On Twitter, the DEC thanked the Queen for making a "generous donation" to support the humanitarian appeal.

On Thursday, Saleh Saeed, chief executive of the DEC, said: "I could never have envisaged launching a humanitarian appeal in the heart of Europe in 2022.

"But tragically, that's exactly where we find ourselves.

"The last time we launched an appeal in Europe was for Kosovo, more than 20 years ago.

"We thought never again. We were wrong."

Every pound donated by the UK public will be matched by the Government through its Aid Match scheme, up to the value of £20 million.

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*"The mouth of a bear": Ukrainian refugees sent to Russia*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65YT-7SD1-DY4H-K4MR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 20, 2022 Wednesday 7:17 AM GMT

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**Length:** 3576 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Nearly 2 million Ukrainians refugees have been sent to Russia

**Body**

For weeks [*Natalya*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/natalya) Zadoyanova had lost contact with her younger brother Dmitriy, who was trapped in the besieged Ukrainian port city of [*Mariupol*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mariupol).

Russian forces had bombed the orphanage where he worked, and he was huddling with dozens of others in the freezing basement of a building without doors and windows. When she next heard from him, he was in tears.

“I’m alive,” he told her. “I’m in Russia.”

Dmitriy Zadoyanov was facing the next chapter of devastation for the people of Mariupol and other occupied cities: Forcible transfers to Russia, the very nation that killed their neighbors and shelled their hometowns almost into oblivion.

Nearly 2 million Ukrainians refugees have been sent to Russia, according to both Ukrainian and Russian officials. Ukraine portrays these journeys as forced transfers to enemy soil, which is considered a war crime. Russia calls them humanitarian evacuations of war victims who already speak Russian and are grateful for a new home.

An Associated Press investigation based on dozens of interviews has found that while the picture is more nuanced than the Ukrainian government suggests, many refugees are indeed forced to embark on a surreal trip into Russia, subjected along the way to human rights abuses, stripped of documents and left confused and lost about where they are.

The abuses start not with a gun to the head, but with a poisoned choice: Die in Ukraine or live in Russia. Those who leave go through a series of what are known as filtration points, where treatment ranges from interrogation and strip searches to being yanked aside and never seen again. [*Refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) told the [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) of an old woman who died in the cold, her body swollen, and an evacuee beaten so severely that her back was covered in bruises.

Those who “pass” the filtrations are invited to live in Russia, and often promised a payment of about 10,000 rubles ($170) that they may or may not get. Sometimes their Ukrainian passports are taken away, and the chance of Russian citizenship is offered instead. And sometimes, they are pressured to sign documents denouncing the Ukrainian government and military.

Those with no money or contacts in Russia — the majority, by most accounts — can only go where they are sent, eastward, even to the sub-Arctic. More than 1,000 are as far away as Khabarovsk and Vladivostok, a 10-day train journey to the edge of the Pacific Ocean, according to people the AP spoke with who saw multiple trains arrive over the weeks of the war.

However, the AP investigation also found signs of clear dissent within Russia to the government narrative that Ukrainians are being rescued from Nazis. Almost all the refugees the AP interviewed spoke gratefully about Russians who quietly helped them escape through a clandestine network, retrieving documents, finding shelter, buying train and bus fare, exchanging Ukrainian hryvnia for Russian rubles and even lugging the makeshift baggage that holds all that remains of their pre-war lives.

The investigation is the most extensive to date on the transfers, based on interviews with 36 Ukrainians mostly from Mariupol who left for Russia, including 11 still there and others in Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Georgia, Ireland, Germany and Norway. The AP also drew on interviews with Russian underground volunteers, video footage, Russian legal documents and Russian state media.

The story of Zadoyanov, 32, is typical. Exhausted and hungry in the basement in Mariupol, he finally accepted the idea of evacuation. The Russians told him he could board a bus to either Zaporizhzhia in Ukraine or Rostov-on-Don in Russia.

They lied. The buses went only to Russia.

Along the way, Russian authorities searched his phone and interrogated him on why he was baptized and whether he had sexual feelings toward a boy in the camp. A man from Russian state television wanted to bring him to Moscow and pay him to denigrate the Ukrainians, an offer he declined. People with video cameras also asked arriving children to talk about how Ukraine was bombarding its own citizens.

“It was 100 percent a tactical pressure,” Zadoyanov said. “Why children? Because it is much easier to manipulate them."

Then he, five children and four women were taken to the train station and told their destination would be Nizhny Novgorod, even deeper into Russia, 1,300 kilometers (800 miles) from the Ukrainian border. From the train, Zadoyanov called his sister Natalya in Poland. Her panic rose.

Get off the train, she told him. Now.

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A DELIBERATE STRATEGY

The transfer of hundreds of thousands of people from Ukraine is part of a deliberate and systemic strategy, laid out in Russian government documents.

An “emergency mass order” describes the “distribution” of 100,000 Ukrainians to some of the most remote and impoverished regions of Russia. None was to be sent to the capital, Moscow.

The AP verified through interviews with refugees, media reports and official statements that Ukrainians have received temporary accommodation in more than two dozen Russian cities and localities, and were even taken to an unused chemical plant in the Bashkortistan region, 150 kilometres (100 miles) from the nearest major town. One refugee, Bohdan Honcharov, told the AP that about 50 Ukrainians he traveled with were sent to Siberia, so far away that they effectively disappeared with little chance of escape.

A Ukrainian woman also said her elderly parents from Mariupol were sent to Russia and told to move to Vladivostok, at the other end of the country. Russian border authorities did not let her father out of Russia because he still had Soviet citizenship from the old times, along with Ukrainian residency documents.

Many Ukrainians stay in Russia because while they are technically free to leave, they have nowhere to go, no money, no documents or no way to cross the distances in a sprawling country twice the size of the United States. Some fear that if they return, Ukraine will prosecute them for going to the enemy — a fear encouraged by Russian officials.

Others speak Russian, with family there and ties that they feel are stronger even than their links to Ukraine. One woman told the AP that her husband was Russian and she felt more welcome in Russia.

Lyudmila Bolbad’s family walked out of Mariupol and ended up in Taganrog in Russia. The family speaks Russian, and the city of Khabarovsk, nearly 10,000 kilometers from Ukraine, was offering jobs, special payments for moving to the Far East and eventual Russian citizenship. With nothing left to lose, they took the 9-day train trip across some of the world’s most deserted territory to a city far closer to Japan than Ukraine.

Bolbad and her husband found work in a local factory, much as she was doing in the Azovstal steel mill back in Mariupol. Little else has gone as they’d hoped.

They handed over their Ukrainian passports in exchange for promises of Russian citizenship without hesitation, only to discover that landlords would not rent to Ukrainians without a valid identity document. The promised payments to buy a home are slow to come, and they are stranded with hundreds of others from Mariupol in a rundown hotel with barely edible food. But Bolbad plans to stay in Russia, and thinks Ukraine would label her a traitor if she went back.

“Now we are here ... we’re trying to return to a normal life somehow, to encourage ourselves to start our life from scratch,” she said. “If you survived (the war), you deserve it and need to move forward, not stop.”

Russia’s reasons for deporting Ukrainians are not entirely clear, according to Oleksandra Matviichuk, the head of the Center for Civil Liberties in Ukraine. One goal appears to be to use the refugees in propaganda to sell Russians on the Ukraine war by pressuring them to testify against Ukraine.

“(Ukrainians in) the Russian Federation are extremely vulnerable,” she said. “Russia tries to use these people in a quasi-legal war against Ukraine to collect some testimonies from people who have no right to say no because they are afraid for their safety.”

The deportation of local civilians from occupied territories also clears the way for Russians to replace them with loyalists, as was the case in Crimea, Matviichuk said. And Russia may want Russian-speaking Ukrainians to populate its own isolated regions with depressed economies.

Ivan Zavrazhnov describes the terror of being in Russia and not knowing where he would wind up. A producer for a pro-Ukrainian television network in Mariupol, he made it through filtration only because officials never bothered to plug in his dead cell phone. He managed to escape, and ended up on the docked ferry Isabelle in the city of Narva in Estonia with about 2,000 other Ukrainians, nearly all of whom left Russia.

“This is some kind of incomprehensible lottery – who decides where and what,” he said. “You understand that you are going, as it were, into the mouth of a bear ... an aggressor state, and you end up on this territory. ... I did not have the feeling that I was safe in Russia.”

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STOPPED FOR FILTRATION

Refugees on the way to Russia are interrogated at multiple stops, in what both Russians and Ukrainians call “filtration.” Each time, some are weeded out.

They are fingerprinted and photographed, which the Ukrainian government calls the collection of biological information. Some are stripped of their clothing, and those with tattoos, wounds or bruises from munitions come under special scrutiny. Phones are confiscated and sometimes connected to computers, raising fears that tracking software is installed.

The Kovalevskiy family left Mariupol after eating cold scraps of food in an unlit basement and watching sores fester on their unwashed skin. At their first filtration, they held their breaths and thought fearfully of the photo and video the eldest daughter had transferred from her phone to a flash drive hidden among their belongings.

It never crossed her mind to delete her contacts. When a Russian soldier searched her phone, he stopped at the one listed as “Commander” and pulled her aside.

She explained that the “commander” was not a military connection but the head of the youth camp where she worked for two years. The explanation was satisfactory — this time. But they did not know how many more times they would be interrogated — Human Rights Watch has identified 14 filtration points in Ukrainian territory controlled by Russian forces.

The next stop was Vynohradne, named for its vineyards but now one of the mass grave sites established by Russia for Mariupol's thousands of dead. The tent there was freezing and suffocatingly crowded, and the smell of rotting flesh clung to their nostrils. An old woman died overnight in the minus 9-degree (15 degrees Fahrenheit) temperatures, her body swelling.

The mother, Viktoria Kovalevska, peered outside to the tent next door and saw a wooden crate that a soldier had dropped to the ground. Inside were severed limbs.

Finally, the family reached the Russian city of Taganrog. When questioned by Russian officials about why they had left their hometown, the mother could no longer restrain herself.

“We did not leave; we were deported,” she replied testily. “We were loaded into cars by the military and taken away.”

Dozens of people from Mariupol were then given free train passage to two Russian cities: Volgograd, about 600 kilometers (370 miles) to the east, or Penza, twice as far.

“You go where you’re told,” they heard.

The Kovalevskiy family was among the lucky ones – they made it through the filtrations.

At an interrogation in Donetsk, a Mariupol policewoman was blindfolded and taken to Yolonevska, she told the AP. There, she saw military personnel and civilians taken for reasons that ranged from taking photographs of military equipment to running down the street in a panic. Some were beaten, and one woman's back was covered with bruises. She heard others died.

She was blindfolded again, handcuffed and taken to the Rostov region in Russia. She asked where they were going. “Somewhere,” they said, and ordered her to be silent.

She was told that evacuees in Russia would be seen as traitors and get a prison term of 10 years if they returned to Ukraine. She was finally set free in a prisoner exchange, and found her way back to Ukraine anyway.

“They psychologically influence people,” she said. “Many of the detainees who are released are simply afraid to return to Ukraine after hearing such stories.”

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IDENTITIES IN QUESTION

The ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Russia sometimes lose their identities along with their homes.

Some leave their Ukrainian documents behind. Others have their Ukrainian passports confiscated and are offered Russian citizenship or refugee status. Many end up in limbo without paperwork, and only 55,502 have received temporary asylum, according to Russia’s human rights ombudsman, Tatiana Moskalkova. The others have uncertain legal standing in a country where they are often seen as the enemy.

Along with giving up their own documents, ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are sometimes pressured to sign papers holding the Ukrainian government or military responsible for the war.

Eighty-year-old Valentina Bondarenko still doesn’t know what she signed. When soldiers in white armbands burst into the Mariupol basement, she climbed out of the window, kicking over the cup holding her dentures.

She was taken with a few other elderly women on a bus through filtration in three Ukrainian towns, and then to Taganrog in Russia. Her next stop, she was told, would be Perm, 2,100 kilometers (1,300 miles) away.

There were only enough Ukrainian passengers that day to fill four of the train’s 10 cars. So the train was cancelled. She ended up in a town near the Georgia border that her family had never heard of, in a dormitory with 50 others from Mariupol.

She called her adult children still in Ukraine, coughing every few minutes. They were frantic. Increasingly distraught, Bondarenko asked migration officials how she could get out.

“There’s only one way open, which is to apply for Russian citizenship, submit an application, receive all the documents and when you get your passport you can go wherever you want,” they told her.

They asked everyone with Ukrainian passports to hand them over to start the process. So she did. Then came a residency application and a document that an official would not let her examine.

“There’s nothing to read here, and we’re running late,” he told her.

“What is written here?” Bondarenko persisted.

“Everything we talked about,” came the reply. She signed. Her passport was returned to her a few days later.

Many evacuees don’t realize they have the right to refuse to sign documents and the right to leave Russia, according to Tanya Lokshina, author of an upcoming Human Rights Watch report on forced deportations. HRW and the Ukrainian Center for Civil Liberties documented multiple cases where Ukrainians like Bondarenko were pressured into signing paperwork, including documents accusing Ukraine’s military of war crimes.

“When you are there and they have the power and you’re basically in their hands, you don’t know what’s going to happen,” Lokshina said. “So many people sign just because they are afraid.”

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ANGELS WHO CAME FROM HEAVEN

For Ukrainians trying to escape, help often comes from an unexpected source: Russians.

On a recent day in Estonia, a Russian tattoo artist easily hefted the suitcases of a Mariupol family into the trunk of a waiting car. The matriarch sat in front, seemingly oblivious to the car’s Russian license plates or unsurprised at underground help from another Russian.

The tattoo artist, who asked that his name be withheld because he still lives in Russia, was the last in a chain of volunteers that stretched 1,900 kilometers (1,100 miles) from Taganrog and Rostov to Narva, the Estonian border town. He boards in St. Petersburg a couple of times a week to accompany refugees to Finland and sometimes Estonia. There is always at least one Ukrainian family that needs an extra pair of strong arms, if nothing else.

“They are disoriented. ... You need to meet them at one station and take them to another station, because otherwise people get lost,” he said. “It’s clear they’re not psychologically equipped.”

He said Russians involved in helping Ukrainians leave know each other only through Telegram, nearly all keeping anonymous “because everyone is afraid of some kind of persecution.” Some of the loose groups are set up with chatbots to protect identities.

“I can’t stop it,” he said of the war and the forcible transfers of Ukrainians to Russia. “This is what I can do. ... Shooting at people, this is normal in the 21st century, with old Soviet pieces of iron? This is utter nonsense.”

The volunteers face a slew of challenges. Those in Penza in Russia shut down their efforts because of anonymous threats that included slashed tires, the Russian symbol Z painted in white on a windshield and graffiti on doors and gates calling them the likes of “Ukro-Nazi” helpers.

Another Russian volunteer, who also communicated with The Associated Press on condition of anonymity, said they faced logistical and bureaucratic hurdles thrown up by the Russian government, such as travel documents lost or taken by administrators.

“They had organizational problems, but they created an amazing chain to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***,” she wrote in a message to AP.

Leaving Russia is still often dependent on luck and an official’s whims. Some Russian border guards let people through with just their Ukrainian national identity; others insist upon an international passport. In at least one case, a family wasn’t allowed to travel without a Russian passport. Armed men search the refugees in a final “filtration” and disembark a passenger or two.

For Zadoyanov, Bondarenko, Kovalevska and many others, the lifeline out of Russia was Russians.

After talking with his sister Natalya, Zadoyanov got off the train to Nizhny Novgorod. Natalya Zadoyanova found local people through church contacts inside Russia to take her brother and the others away from the station. They ended up at a church where they got food, shelter and eventually the first steps in finding a way out of Russia. Zadoyanov is now in the country of Georgia.

For Bondarenko, the elderly woman from Mariupol who signed unknown papers, her children in Ukraine found volunteers to help. One arrived at Bondarenko’s dormitory and demanded her release, saying the law protected a refugee’s freedom of movement. He took her to a hotel, with the room pre-paid for two nights. The third night, she stayed at the home he shared with his Ukrainian wife.

The couple bought her sneakers, clothes and food for the trip to come.

“We are against the war, against Putin,” they told her.

In St. Petersburg, another volunteer met her at the train, took her to his apartment for the night and helped her get to the bus station.

“At the Russian border, no matter what, do not tell them you want to return to Ukraine,” he warned her. “Say you are going to Estonia to visit family.”

It took about 90 minutes to pass the Russian side of the border. At one point, guards checked passports. Bondarenko’s noted Mariupol as her hometown, and they pulled her aside and asked what her destination was.

“I won’t lie. I want to return to Ukraine, to my children,” she answered, torn between defiance and fear. She was asked to wait and imagined the worst.

She didn’t know it, but she was already in Estonia. The guard returned with a giant smile and an even bigger box filled with food and water.

Bondarenko finally joined her children in the western Ukrainian city of Uzhhorod on May 20, having paid nothing for a 4,300-kilometer (2,600-mile) journey organized from start to finish by volunteers.

Viktoria Kovalevska persuaded a bus driver at a detention center in Russia to hide the family on board.

“We sat like mice. ... I closed the curtains,” she said.

After about an hour, the driver said, “Let’s go.” When the family emerged from their hiding spot in Rostov, two taxis arrived for them and their bags. They were given hot soup and a way to finally wash their stained, charred clothes, and stayed up until 3 a.m. doing laundry.

Train tickets materialized to St. Petersburg, where other volunteers bought a suitcase to replace their fraying bags. Then it was a near-seamless trip to Estonia. Kovalevska warned her daughters to say nothing when they were roughly asked at the crossing why they wanted to leave Russia.

“You can get a bullet in the forehead and not tell the whole truth about what happened, or you can wait and later say everything as it was,” she told the girls.

The whole journey took four days.

Her memories of Mariupol are a nightmare — the torso of a woman in the street, her daughter stepping in human brains smeared on the ground, the hunger and cold that she feared would kill them more painfully than bombs. But her memories of Russia are laced with the unexpected, surreptitious kindness they received from Russian volunteers.

“I would love to say their names,” said Kovalevska, her face lighting up. “And I would tell them all, you are like angels who came from heaven and sheltered us with your wings. ... Because there was no hope. None.”

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Anastasiia Shvets and Elizaveta Telnaya contributed from Lviv, Ukraine. Oleksandr Stashevskyi contributed from Kyiv, Ukraine. Mstyslav Chernov contributed from Kharkiv, Ukraine. Sophiko Megrelidze contributed from Tblisi, Georgia. Cara Anna reported from Kviv and Sarah El Deeb reported from Beirut, Lebanon.

**Load-Date:** July 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees arrive at visa centre to be told they must travel 170 miles to complete application*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YH-4931-DY4H-K2V8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 9, 2022 Wednesday 7:32 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:4

**Length:** 893 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** UK accused of sending refugees 'from pillar to post' and putting them through 'unbearable' process

**Body**

[***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) have attended a UK visa centre in [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) to submit an application to join relatives in the UK, only to be told that they must travel 170 miles across the country in order to complete the process.

Ministers have been accused of sending refugees "from pillar to post" after it emerged that people arriving at a visa centre in Rzeszów, Poland, to apply under the UK's family migration route are being told to go to another centre in Warsaw, a four-hour journey, to obtain their visa.

British residents who have travelled to Poland to help their elderly mothers who have fled Ukraine to apply under the [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) 's family migration route, which opened on Friday, have told The Independent the application process is "unbearable".

The Home Office has said that people must collect their final [*visas*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/visas) in Warsaw because they are printed there for security reasons. A spokesperson added that logistically, it was easier for people to travel to the UK from Warsaw too due to availability of flights and transport.

However flights to the UK are available from both Rzeszów and Warsaw, and Warsaw is not on route if one is driving from Rzeszów to Britain.

Shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper said it was "appalling" that the home secretary was letting this happen, adding: "People who've made dangerous journeys from a war zone shouldn't be sent from pillar to post before they can join family."

Marianne Kay, an IT manager living in the UK who arrived in Poland on Saturday morning to meet her elderly mother who has fled from Ukraine, said that after they managed to submit her application on Tuesday, they were told they must travel to Warsaw to obtain the document.

Speaking to The Independent, the 43-year-old, who said she and her mother were already confronted with "inhuman" treatment in Rzeszów as they waited for an appointment at the overcrowded and "chaotic" visa centre, said: "Do I have to drag my mum somewhere again?

"The congestion here is horrendous, there are refugees everywhere, and adding to that is just strange. Why ask people to travel backwards and forwards across Poland, when there are lots of people here who really need to be somewhere?

"It is tiring, and it seems so very unnecessary. I've not got to the point of calculating what the cost of this 'free' visa is, but it will be close to £1,000 by the time we've gotten out of here - with flights, accommodation and everything."

Commenting on Britain's response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis, Ms Kay said: "The UK government is trying to say that they are playing their part and helping Ukrainians, but the reality is very different. It does feel like a lie. It feels like the system was designed to let as few people as possible into the country, because it's definitely achieving that.

"It's inhuman to have these visa centres where people are treated so poorly. It's humiliating and it's degrading. I think the UK has to do more."

In another case, Kateryna Shamshuryna, who works for Thames Valley Police, was told she and her elderly mother must also travel to Warsaw after submitting her mother's visa application.

The pair travelled on a train to Warsaw on Tuesday night, and in their rush to catch the last bus to the hotel they had booked her mother tripped over and injured her head.

"It was already night. This was the fifth day of my mother's journey. As we walked out of the train station, we rushed to get the last bus to the hotel. She got worried and anxious, and she was tired. She tripped over and fell on the concrete floor," said Ms Shamshuryna.

"Blood was everywhere. The police and ambulance came. It was absolutely horrific, then we were sitting in A&E for forever and a day. The stress was taking over."

She added: "They've made the process absolutely unbearable. How do they expect people to travel from Rzeszów to Warsaw, find somewhere somewhere to stay for days while we wait for the visa. They're not making it easy for people at all. They're creating a problem."

In a third case, Kateryna Petrenko, a Ukrainian national living in the UK, tweeted on Wednesday: "My mum has just submitted her biometrics in Rzeszów and she was told that she has to wait for an email and after go to Warsaw to get a visa stamp in her passport. It was chaos.

"How long does she have to wait? Why go to Warsaw? There is no information anywhere!"

A government spokesperson said it was "increasing capacity to meet demand" and would "keep it under continuous review and increase further if needed".

"We have protected appointments for Ukrainians at Rzeszow and these are available to book - so people should book online rather than attempt a walk-in appointment," they added.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Scots host families 'frustrated' at slowness of visas for Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6551-1D21-JBNF-W3TM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 4, 2022 Monday 11:35 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 644 words

**Byline:** Katrine Bussey

**Highlight:** People who have signed up to take in refugees are facing the 'heart-breaking' task of telling them they cannot come as visas have not been granted.

**Body**

[*Families*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/families) who have volunteered to take in refugees from Ukraine are having to deal with the "heart-breaking" task of telling them they cannot come yet because visas have not yet been granted.

Gary Gray, who runs the volunteer organisation scothosts.org, said so far only a "paltry" 270 visas had been granted to allow people from Ukraine to travel to Scotland.

And with thousands of [*Scots*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scots) having offered to open their home to those fleeing the war, he said there was "frustration" at the length of time it was taking for the paperwork to be carried out.

His comments come after Scottish [*First Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/first-minister) , [*Nicola Sturgeon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nicola-sturgeon) , complained that the "process of translating applications into visas is unacceptably slow".

The First Minister hit out: "There is a clear and urgent need to speed up the processing of applications and the granting of visas.

"It is essential that the UK Government addresses these lengthy delays to provide rapid support to those in need."

Speaking on Friday, she said: "In the midst of a harrowing conflict, it is neither reasonable nor morally acceptable to expect people fleeing a brutal invasion to go through the bureaucratic processes being put in their way and wait weeks to be given a visa."

Her comments were echoed by Mr Gray, who said that often the situation could be hindered because only one person in a family group would be granted a visa, leaving them unable to come to the UK together.

Of the 270 visas he said had been granted for Scotland, he added: "You may have one out of four family members have got their visa approved."

As a result of this he told BBC Radio Scotland's Good Morning Scotland programme: "We don't think there is that many that have been able to come to Scotland."

Mr Gray said his organisation was "very much calling on the UK Government to remove the requirement for visas" - something the [*Scottish Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scottish-government) has already urged the the Home Office to do.

The hardest part of this is telling the families in Ukraine 'I'm sorry, the visa still hasn't been approved'. That's the hardest part, it is heart-breaking

Gary Gray, scothosts.org

"These families are fleeing a warzone," he said.

"What I would use as an example is how Ireland are processing this, they are managing to process the people who come to Ireland in 12 hours.

"We are currently in a situation more than 12 days out there are people who have not had their visas approved and they are getting very little information."

By insisting people coming from Ukraine have a visa before entering the UK, Mr Gray claimed that the Home Office was "using the existing immigration route for an emergency situation".

He added: "We feel that is not really appropriate for the situation we are in, we need something bespoke, rather than a normal immigration route."

The organisation scothosts.org is working with 800 families across Scotland who have registered to host refugees from Ukraine.

And Mr Gray said: "The level of frustration is high, our members are doing everything they can to find out what is happening.

"The hardest part of this is telling the families in Ukraine 'I'm sorry, the visa still hasn't been approved'. That's the hardest part, it is heart-breaking having to tell these families, it just hasn't been approved because of bureaucracy."

A UK Government spokesman said: "We are moving as quickly as possible to ensure that those fleeing Ukraine can find safety in the UK through the Ukraine Family Scheme and Homes for Ukraine.

"We have streamlined the process so valid passport holders do not have to attend in-person appointments before arriving in the UK, simplified our forms and boosted caseworker numbers, while ensuring vital security checks are carried out.

"We continue to speed up visa processing across both schemes, with almost 30,000 visas issued in the last three weeks alone and thousands more expected to come through these uncapped routes."

**Load-Date:** April 4, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees in UK facing homelessness due to renting red tape, charity warns*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65R6-TFS1-JBNF-W1MY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 19, 2022 Sunday 11:52 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:4

**Length:** 610 words

**Byline:** Zoe Tidman

**Highlight:** Checks could be impossible for refugees to pass, organisations say

**Body**

Ukrainians fleeing war could face homelessness as a result of the administrative checks required to access the private rental market in the UK, charities have warned.

Tens of thousands of refugees have come to live in the country under the Homes for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) scheme, which enables Britons with a spare room or house to “match” with families or individuals escaping [*the Russian invasion*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-putin-health-weapons-latest-b2104384.html).

Those offering to host Ukrainians sign up for a committment of at least six months.

Charities are now warning that refugees may face problems taking the next step of renting their own home, which could require checks that would be impossible for them to pass.

Opora, a charitable organisation that supports Ukrainians who have moved to the UK, is reported to have said it has been contacted by refugees who cannot access private lettings because of failed referencing checks.

A couple from Lviv, Dmytro Chapovski and his wife Polina, told [*The Guardian*](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/jun/19/ukrainians-face-a-homeless-future-in-the-uk-thanks-to-red-tape-on-renting) they were struggling to find somewhere to rent after moving to the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Their host in Shropshire, Janet Duchesne, told the newspaper that a dozen letting agents had said the Ukrainian couple had “no chance of letting in this country”.

Mr Chapovski told The Guardian he had eventually found an agency willing to let to him, but then needed to show proof of earnings and a tax history in the UK – which, having arrived in April, he does not have – or provide 12 months’ rent upfront.

Stanislav Benes, from the Opora network, is reported as saying that the government needs to support landlords to rent to Ukrainians and set up a guarantor scheme for the refugees, who are at risk of [*homelessness*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homelessness) if such action is not taken.

“It will overburden existing resources that are already overstretched, which means more and more people will start falling through the cracks,” he told The Guardian.

Government figures show that hundreds of Ukrainians – more than 660 households – have already been [*forced to register as homeless in the UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-children-refugees-homeless-councils-uk-b2102638.html) after arriving under the available schemes.

Another charity, Mums4Ukraine, [*warned that delays in Homes for Ukraine hosts being given a monthly £350 “thank you” payment*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/uk-news/ukraine-war-refugee-host-delay-b2104172.html) had meant – in the most serious cases – that refugees were having to leave their accommodation.

Others have raised concerns over what happens when Ukrainians leave their host families.

Sophie Delamothe, from campaign group Generation Rent, told The Guardian: “There are so many pieces of information that you need to provide, that people who’ve just recently come to this country as refugees just might not have access to.”

A government spokesperson said: “More than 77,200 Ukrainians have arrived in the UK since Putin’s invasion, and the vast majority are staying with sponsors or relatives.

“We are carefully monitoring this situation and will work across government and with landlords to ensure Ukrainians are receiving the help they need.”

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered.

To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** June 19, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Next wave of Ukrainian refugees will be more vulnerable, politicians told*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6528-X7R1-DY4H-K0HJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 22, 2022 Tuesday 8:49 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 664 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** TDs and senators were warned that the crisis in Ukraine will also have a knock-on impact on the world's poorest countries.

**Body**

The next wave of refugees from Ukraine will be more vulnerable, aid agencies have warned [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) politicians.

A meeting of the Oireachtas Foreign Affairs and [*Defence*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/defence) Committee heard harrowing testimony on Tuesday from aid agencies and charities about the humanitarian crisis sparked by the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

But TDs and senators were also warned that the crisis will also have a knock-on impact on the world's poorest countries.

Ros O'[*Sullivan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sullivan) , head of emergency operations at international humanitarian organisation Concern Worldwide, joined the meeting virtually from [*Krakow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/krakow) in Poland.

The 6.5 million people internally displaced within [*#Ukraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Ukraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) must be afforded the same dignity as those who have left the country. We must double down on efforts to make sure this happens --Concern's Ros O'Sullivan's closing comments to Oireachtas Joint Comm on Foreign Affairs [*pic.twitter.com/GAvOoENTlk*](https://t.co/GAvOoENTlk) - Concern Worldwide (@Concern) [*March 22, 2022*](https://twitter.com/Concern/status/1506313181978841088?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) He told TDs that if the war continues, the next wave of refugees to flee the country will need extra help.While millions have already fled, he said: "They have some resources. They have connections."That will not be the same with any subsequent wave."These people, if they do have to cross out of Ukraine, will have little or no resources to look after themselves."They will likely never have been out of their region, let alone the country before."A very different type of Ukrainian, and a person leaving the country with different and advanced needs."Dóchas ask that the members of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence support these vital asks: 1) A peaceful resolution to the conflict in [*#Ukraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Ukraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) must be the top priority. (cont. below)- Dóchas (@Dochasnetwork) [*March 22, 2022*](https://twitter.com/Dochasnetwork/status/1506314375157755907?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Mr O'Sullivan also warned that the systems rapidly established to support displaced Ukrainians can "only be maintained and sustained for a short while".Describing them as being held together by "sheer goodwill and affinity", he said they could easily be "overwhelmed" by larger numbers.He said: "There is a risk of confusion between military and humanitarian roles and operations, and a very real threat of 'diversion of humanitarian aid' as Ukraine is on a full war footing and under martial law."The Ukraine crisis is very dynamic, uncertain and fast moving."Humanitarian operations and funding needs to be flexible in order to be able to shift operations to different activities, sectors and/or geographic areas within Ukraine as well as into the EU and Moldova."The same meeting heard that the knock-on impact of the war on food programmes for developing countries would be severe.The war in [*#Ukraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Ukraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) is already impacting millions of lives inside AND outside the country.Food prices have reached a new all-time high according to the [*@FAO*](https://twitter.com/FAO?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Food Price Index.The collateral damage? Catastrophic global hunger. [*pic.twitter.com/nSbuG8JNLL*](https://t.co/nSbuG8JNLL) - World Food Programme (@WFP) [*March 22, 2022*](https://twitter.com/WFP/status/1506335715851919365?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Ukraine, often dubbed the breadbasket of the word, is a vital source of global wheat and grain.

Aid agencies warned of the perils facing people in nations depending on the UN [*World Food Programme*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/world-food-programme).

Jane-Ann McKenna, chief executive of Dochas, the Irish association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations, told politicians: "The closure of ports and cessation of exports will have widespread humanitarian implications for Africa and other low-and middle-income countries.

"Twenty-three African countries are dependent on Russia and Ukraine for more than half the imports of one of their staple goods."

Dominic MacSorley, chief executive of Concern, echoed this.

"There is talk in Brussels of the doubling of the militarisation budget. We're not hearing about a doubling of the humanitarian budget for Ukraine.

"Cash, and cash assistance, is critical. We are going to be using that in Ukraine."

But he stressed the need for a wider outlook. "Ukraine, yes, in terms of donor funding. But as well as, and not instead of, all the other crises."

**Load-Date:** March 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'We feel powerless': The Ukrainian refugees unable to join loved ones in Britain under Home Office scheme*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WY-TV11-DY4H-K3GM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 2, 2022 Wednesday 10:08 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:3

**Length:** 874 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** 'We have a warm house for them. We love them. Why should they be somewhere else?' asks Tetiana Bykova, Ukrainian who is unable to bring her cousin's wife and three-year-old to live with her in Glasgow

**Body**

[*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) and British nationals living in the UK have said they are "frustrated" after it emerged that their loved ones who have fled Ukraine are likely to be excluded from the UK's bespoke humanitarian route.

The [*Home Office*](https://indy-web-prod.brightsites.co.uk/topic/home-office) announced on Tuesday that it was expanding the route to include parents, grandparents, adult children and siblings of British nationals and people settled in the UK. They also said a new sponsorship scheme was being established to help people fleeing the Russia invasion.

Home secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://indy-web-prod.brightsites.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) said the offer was in the "best interests" of Ukrainian people and would see thousands of [*refugees*](https://indy-web-prod.brightsites.co.uk/topic/refugees) welcomed to the UK, with normal requirements for salary and language tests waived.

However, [*campaigners warn*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-visas-home-office-priti-patel-uk-b2026074.html) that it still excludes swathes of refugees who would benefit from coming to the UK, such as partners or cousins of British nationals, or close relatives of people in Britain on work or study visas.

The Independent has set up a petition calling on the UK government to be at the forefront of the international community offering aid and support to those in Ukraine. [*To sign the petition click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) .

Lawyers and charities are also concerned about delays in the sponsorship route, as the UK's general sponsorship scheme has helped only around 500 people to resettle over a period of five years.

Ms Patel has so far resisted calls to temporarily waive visas for all Ukrainians entering the UK and carry out security checks on British soil, insisting it would undermine "the strongest security advice".

Tetiana Bykova, a Ukrainian national living in Glasgow, said she was hoping to bring her cousin's wife Julia and three-year-old daughter Miroslava - who recently managed to escape from Ukraine to the Czech Republic - to live with her in the UK, but that the current family route did not allow for that.

Ms Bykova said she and her British husband wished to accommodate and support them while her cousin, Roman, stayed in Ukraine to fight Russian forces, but that due to the visa rules they were having to try to support them from afar.

"My cousin was like a brother to me. We want to help his wife and child. We have a warm house for them. We love them. Why should they be somewhere else? Along with financial support, we can give them moral support, because they're so scared," she said.

"I've recently had a baby so my husband is taking time out of job as a doctor to fly to the Czech Republic on Thursday. We're going to have to help them sort accommodation. We'll be going through all these complications when they could just be here with us."

Ms Bykova added: "I've been through the UK immigration system myself and had a lot of difficulties, but come on, this is war. The UK is a wealthy country. Other European countries responded so much better to this. It's disappointing. The UK hasn't even done the minimum."

In another case, Andrii Zharikov, a Ukrainian-born lecturer at the University of Portsmouth who has been in the UK for six years and is on a work visa, is trying to arrange for his younger sister Anna-Maria, 19, to join him after she fled Ukraine on Monday.

But the 30-year-old told The Independent his sister cannot benefit from the extension of the family scheme due to the fact that, although he is a taxpaying British resident, he is not considered "settled" in the UK because he is on a work visa.

He said he hoped she might be able to come on the sponsor route, but that this would require finding a British national to sponsor her.

"It's not ideal. I'll need to ask friends who are prepared to do this. I haven't been able to find any information on what the requirements are. The government website hasn't changed, so it's still all a bit unclear," he said.

Responding to Ms Patel's claim that allowing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to enter without visas would undermine security advice, Mr Zharikov added: "It's frustrating to hear statements like this because I'm sure the UK authorities know that the only people able to leave Ukraine are the elderly, women and children."

In a further case, Peter Baron, 65, said he felt "powerless" because he is unable to bring his Ukrainian partner of four years to join him in the UK, as unmarried partners who haven't been living together do not fall under the scheme.

The Chichester resident, whose partner Nina, 41, is currently sleeping on the floor of a friend's apartment in Istanbul, said: "I'm shocked by the whole process. It's like they haven't thought anything through. I've had sleepless nights trying to work out what the hell to do.

"We're powerless because we have a government that has no understanding whatsoever of the situation people are in, no idea of the suffering that is happening."

Mr Baron added: "To say they aren't waiving visas for 'security reasons' is the most appalling non-excuse I've heard in my life. These are women and children. Why don't we do what Ireland does - let them get on a plane, arrive and then do the security check."

The Independent is also raising money for the people of Ukraine - if you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gofundme.com%2Frefugeeswelcome&data=04%7C01%7CRichard.Booth%40independent.co.uk%7C2a2d4959602a48a7514408d9fbc3eb4d%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637817641168940275%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=ATpA7MHdDll9gTN2YA3M0WDLJ14Hml6HE4NixBieVis%3D&reserved=0) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'Chaos': Ukrainian refugees placed with unvetted hosts in unchecked homes as councils wait for funding*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65D9-NV91-JBNF-W4DM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 8, 2022 Sunday 10:06 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:3

**Length:** 1122 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** One mother and son had to be moved to temporary housing after they were placed in a home with a mouse problem and no heating

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have been placed with unvetted hosts and in unsuitable homes because the government has yet to give councils any funding for vital safety checks.

Hosting arrangements under the Homes for Ukraine route are already breaking down, as it emerged the required DBS background checks are not always being done before refugees arrive in the UK.

Families who have fled the war have been forced to pay for hotel rooms or register as homeless after discovering their sponsor's [*housing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/housing) is unsuitable, with reports of rodent infestations, broken boilers and hosts with drug addictions.

One Ukrainian woman arrived at her London host's house to discover she had only a 5 sq m bedroom to share with her six-year-old son, the heating was broken and there were mice running around. The host also refused to give her a key to the property.

The home was later inspected by the local council and deemed to be unsuitable, and they were moved into temporary accommodation.

The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome campaign*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome) is calling for the government to go further and faster to help Ukrainians fleeing their country.

Government data shows 19,500 of the 80,900 people who have applied have so far arrived under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, which opened on 18 March and enables refugees to "match" with UK residents willing to house them.

When the scheme was announced, levelling up secretary Michael Gove encouraged hosts to match with refugees via social media, prompting [*fears*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-social-media-sponosrship-scheme-uk-b2040480.html) that Ukrainians could be targeted by people wishing to exploit them.

A further 17,900 of the 44,200 refugees who have applied under the Ukraine family scheme have arrived, since the initiative allowing them to join UK-based relatives was launched on 4 March.

The Home Office conducts checks against the police national computer before granting a Homes for Ukraine visa, but DBS checks and property inspections are carried out later by local authorities.

Councils are supposed to receive £10,500 per refugee to assist with those checks - at least one of which should be in person and happen before refugees arrive.

If you are a refugee or a host on the Homes for Ukraine scheme and are experiencing problems, get in touch: [*may.bulman@independent.co.uk*](mailto:may.bulman@independent.co.uk)

But the government's own guidance states the payments will not be made until the end of June, which means they often aren't being done until after refugees arrive.

The Independent understands some local authorities have subsequently had to redeploy staff from family and children's social services to carry out the checks.

Shadow levelling up minister Lisa Nandy said it was "shameful" the government had "wasted so much generosity and let down the people of Ukraine by continually failing to get a grip and do its job".

"The government has failed to provide the information and support that people on the front line need to make this scheme work," she said.

"The result is chaos, unacceptable delays and potentially homelessness for desperate people who have already fled a terrible war."

Hannah Clare, deputy leader of Brighton and Hove City Council, said because the council was yet to receive its funding and it was not provided with information on where a host lives and when the refugee will arrive, checks were taking place "a matter of weeks rather than days" after refugees get here.

"It's not possible for us to complete the property checks before they arrive, so it is happening after, which isn't ideal," she said.

"We've had a case where that relationship's broken down before we could do that check, showing just how important it is. It really doesn't protect the refugees, or the hosts either. It's a danger all round."

In one case, Natalie, whose name has been changed to protect her identity, arrived in the UK at the start of April with her son, aged six, after matching with a female host through social media.

But she was shocked at the living conditions when she arrived at the south London home.

"It was really dirty. We were shown the bedroom we would share and it was about five square metres. The window was very narrow - you couldn't open it to get fresh air," she told The Independent.

"The boiler wasn't working, so after the flight we couldn't shower. She gave us double blankets, but it was so cold. I noticed the house was full of mice. They were running around, but what could we do? I was in another country. It was 10 or 11pm."

Sutton Council carried out a property check the next day and Natalie was told the home was unsuitable and she would be moved into emergency accommodation within a few days.

In the meantime, Natalie faced more challenges. "She [the host] wouldn't give me a key. One day we went out and when we came back in the evening she was out. She wasn't replying to my messages. We were so cold. It was a Sunday so there was no cafe or anything around."

The pair have since been moved to temporary accommodation where they feel more settled. "We just wanted to live a normal life, but we came from war to that trouble," she said.

Sutton Council said visas were issued before checks are completed and because it does not receive information on when refugees are due to arrive, it was difficult for it prioritise checks for imminent arrivals.

The Local Government Association said councils across the country had reported issues with the information they get from the government, saying it is arriving too slowly, there is data missing, host contact details are not always correct and it does not provide refugees' arrival dates.

Svitlana Opanasenko, a volunteer at Ukraine Social Club, said one young Ukrainian man arrived at a host property to find someone in the family was taking drugs.

"He said he couldn't stay there. He booked a hotel for three nights, but he didn't have money to stay longer. He was looking for a family to stay with, and eventually, luckily, he found one," she said.

"He reported it to the local council and it turns out they didn't check the sponsor, and then they realised it was not suitable."

Ms Opanasenko also described cases where hosts have told refugees they need to do chores in the home to "repay the service".

She asked: "Why is there no database for people to match with hosts who have already been checked?"

A government spokesperson said it would seek to find a further sponsor if a sponsor/guest relationship broke down, and if a suitable one could not be found, refugees would be entitled to housing support.

"We are giving councils £10,500 per person to provide wrap-around support for Ukrainians on the scheme. They must make at least one in-person visit to a sponsor's property and they have a duty to make sure the guest is safe and well once they've arrivedm" the spokesperson said.

**Load-Date:** May 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees could be placed in B&Bs indefinitely*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65FX-DM41-F072-40WP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

May 16, 2022 Monday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 5

**Length:** 913 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

Ukrainian and Afghan refugees in the UK could be housed in B&Bs indefinitely under new laws quietly pushed through by the government, prompting accusations of a "two-tier system" of housing support. An amendment to homelessness laws on Wednesday states the six-week limit homeless families can spend in B&B accommodation will no longer apply to refugees who have fled from Ukraine and Afghanistan.

The changes also set out that councils can place these groups out of area - potentially hundreds of miles away - without taking into account factors such as the disruption to employment and education and access to medical facilities or other support.

An explanatory memorandum on the law changes, prepared by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), states that they are designed to "help local authorities manage an increase in homelessness pressures as a result of two new humanitarian crises".

But housing charity Shelter has warned the move "crosses a red line" by "taking away the hard-won rights" of some homeless people, as well as creating a "two-tier system that singles out refugees and strips away their homeless rights".

A survey of councils by the Local Government Association at the beginning of April revealed that 144 Ukrainian households had presented as homeless across 190 local authorities since the start of the war. The figure is believed to have increased significantly since then but the government would not give a figure.

The government has since carried out its own survey on the number of Ukrainian families who have registered as homeless, but it is refusing to publish the resulting data. Under homelessness laws, it is illegal for local authorities to place families and pregnant women in B&Bs unless there is no other housing available, and in those cases, it must be for a maximum of six weeks.

They also stipulate that before a homeless family is placed out of area the local council must consider a number of factors, including the significance of any disruption to employment or education and proximity to and accessibility of medical facilities.

But the changes mean those rules will no longer apply to anyone who arrived in the UK in the past two years and who has not had settled accommodation in the UK in the three years prior to their arrival. The new regulations are directed primarily at Ukrainian and Afghan refugee households.

The explanatory note states: "These regulations will mean that local authorities will be able to house those who have recently arrived in the UK in B&B accommodation for more than six weeks. In addition, it will mean that for newly arrived households, local authorities will not be required to consider most factors before placing a household out of area (apart from caring responsibilities in respect of family associations), reducing the burden on local authorities facing the greatest pressures and who are most likely to need to place households out of area."

Official data shows 46,100 people who have fled the Russian invasion have so far come to the UK under its two designated visa schemes - Homes for Ukraine, whereby they can join hosts in the UK, and the Ukraine Family scheme, under which they can join relatives. However, a considerable number of these families have been forced to register as homeless with local authorities after their placements have broken down or have been overcrowded.

Meanwhile, around 12,000 Afghans who were evacuated to the UK in August following the Taliban takeover, or have been transferred since, are still in hotels waiting for appropriate housing. The Independent understands they will soon be forced to leave the hotels. The document states the changes, which will come into effect on 1 June 2022 and will be reviewed a year later, are "appropriate and proportionate".

Polly Neate, chief executive of Shelter, told The Independent: "The government has crossed a red line by taking away the hard-won rights of some homeless people. It is appalling to set up a two-tier system that singles out refugees and strips away their homeless rights. Allowing councils to accommodate homeless refugees literally anywhere, with no way challenge where they are sent, is callous and cruel."

She called on ministers to withdraw the "damaging" regulations, adding: "We are talking about people who've fled conflict or persecution, and gone through the strain of homelessness, only to be sent miles away from the place they've started to settle. This could mean children who've been finding their feet at school and making new friends will have to begin all over again - many of whom are recovering from extreme trauma."

Clive Betts, Labour MP and chair of the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee, said the changes were the "completely wrong answer" to the Ukrainian refugee homelessness crisis. He said ministers should instead focus on allowing those whose family scheme placements have broken down to move in with UK residents who are willing to sponsor refugees.

"People have been through trauma and horrors we can't begin to imagine. What they want is to settle down in a nice homely environment, and they're going to stick them in B&Bs for an indefinite amount of time. This cannot be right," the MP added.

A DLUHC spokesperson said: "These temporary changes will only be used as a last resort and will ensure families are not without a roof over their heads. Councils will have to exhaust all other options before placing families in B&B accommodation."

**Load-Date:** May 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Defence officials to help process Ukrainian refugees fleeing to UK*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y7-MTF1-DY4H-K3Y1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 10:33 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 710 words

**Byline:** Gavin Cordon

**Highlight:** Defence Secretary Ben Wallace has offered assistance after the Home Office was criticised for delays in issuing visas to people escaping the invasion.

**Body**

Defence officials are to help process visa applications from Ukrainians fleeing the war amid continuing criticism over the slow rate at which refugees are being admitted to the UK.

The [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) disclosed on Monday night that just 300 visas have been issued out of a total of 17,700 family scheme applications that have been started, 8,900 of which have been submitted.

With 1.7 million people having fled the fighting so far, Defence Secretary [*Ben Wallace*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ben-wallace) acknowledged that the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) needs to move quicker and said he is offering Ministry of Defence (MoD) support to speed up the work.

"The first and foremost duty for all of us is to make sure that people get to safety," he told Sky News.

"Once they've got to safety, making sure we just check their identity before they come to this country - it is incredibly important that we do that.

"It shouldn't take time. And I've offered, I will be offering, to the Home Office assistance from the MoD in the same way we did in Op Pitting (the evacuation of Afghanistan) to increase the processing time to help those people."

He added: "Of course, we can do that quicker, we are leaning into that, the Home Secretary is determined to do that quicker, I will give her all the support I can."

Mr Wallace was also critical of reports that hundreds of Ukrainians who have reached Calais have been told they need to travel back to Paris or Brussels to apply for a visa where they face a lengthy wait.

"It's difficult for those people - why wouldn't it be? - to go all the way back to Paris," he told BBC Breakfast.

"We can do more, we will do more."

"It's not the case that we are only allowing 300 people in; it is the case that the system has not been quick enough, which is what we're going to address."

His comments will increase the pressure on Home Secretary Priti Patel, who is facing growing criticism over the Home Office's response in the face of a growing humanitarian crisis.

SIMPLY NOT GOOD ENOUGH. [*@ukhomeoffice*](https://twitter.com/ukhomeoffice?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) needs to move today from pettifogging process to active delivery. Stop "computer says no" mindset and get on and help. Don't criticise Irish Republic: replicate it. Remember how we responded to Ugandan Asian crisis? We can and must do this [*https://t.co/pY6vPebiCV*](https://t.co/pY6vPebiCV) - Simon Hoare MP (@Simon4NDorset) [*March 8, 2022*](https://twitter.com/Simon4NDorset/status/1501111808945532930?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Labour said the numbers being admitted are "shockingly low", while senior Tory MP Simon Hoare said it is "simply not good enough".

"The Home Office needs to move today from pettifogging process to active delivery. Stop 'computer says no' mindset and get on and help," he tweeted.

The row comes as Prime Minister Boris Johnson is hosting leaders of the Visegrad Four central European nations - Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic - who have seen some of the heaviest influxes of refugees.

Meanwhile Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is set to deliver a "historic address" to the House of Commons after Speaker Sir [*Lindsay Hoyle*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lindsay-hoyle) approved a request for him to speak directly to MPs.

He is expected to use his speech - delivered by video link from Kyiv - to issue a renewed appeal for Western support, including a Nato no-fly zone.

Britain and other allies have ruled that out, warning that it could bring Nato and Russian jets into direct conflict, potentially sparking a wider European war.

Mr Wallace said that however the conflict in Ukraine played out, it was clear that Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) was a "spent force".

He said Mr Putin would not break the people of Ukraine and that he potentially faced decades of occupation which would be impossible to sustain.

"Whatever we think about President Putin, he is done. He is a spent force in the world. No-one will be taking his phone calls in the long term," he told BBC Radio 4's Today programme.

"He has exhausted his army, he is responsible for thousands of Russian soldiers being killed, responsible for innocent people being killed, civilians being killed in Ukraine.

"He is reducing his economy to zero, because the international community has decided that is absolutely unacceptable, what he's done.

"So he is a spent force in the world and I don't know whether he thinks that's a clever thing to be, but that diminishes his own country in the world and he has to take responsibility for that."

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*British public to be asked to take in Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YV-47X1-JBNF-W2TB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 11, 2022 Friday 1:22 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 749 words

**Byline:** Gavin Cordon

**Highlight:** Levelling Up Secretary Michael Gove will set out details of the new 'sponsored' humanitarian route to enter the UK on Monday.

**Body**

The [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) is preparing to invite the [*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) public to open their homes to refugees fleeing the fighting in Ukraine amid continuing criticism of its response to the crisis.

Levelling Up Secretary [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) will set out on Monday details of a new "sponsored" humanitarian route to allow Ukrainians without family links to the UK to come to the country.

The Daily Telegraph reported that ministers will unveil a hotline and webpage where individuals, charities, businesses and community groups will be able to offer rooms to those escaping the conflict.

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) told Sky News: "On Monday, you'll get from the Levelling Up Secretary, you'll get the programme that will allow people to come in, so (if) people want to welcome (refugees) into their own homes, they can do so."

Refugees who enter through the new route will be allowed to stay for an initial period of 12 months during which they will be entitled to work, claim benefits and access public services.

Officials will match them with offers of free accommodation from the sponsoring individuals and organisations who will be vetted to ensure it is safe and secure.

The Telegraph said those offering housing would have to agree to take the refugees for a minimum period - potentially six months - and demonstrate that they meet appropriate standards.

A Government spokesman said the details of the scheme were being worked on "at pace".

"The routes we have put in place follow extensive engagement with Ukrainian partners," the spokesman said.

"This is a rapidly moving and complex picture and as the situation develops we will continue to keep our support under constant review."

The move comes after Home Secretary Priti Patel was urged to do more to make it easier for those coming to the UK through the existing family route.

On Thursday, Ms Patel announced that from Tuesday people will be able to apply online for a visa and will no longer have to go to a processing centre to give their biometrics.

It followed criticism that the UK's response has been painfully slow in the face of the biggest refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War with around 2.2 million having fled the country.

However the British Red Cross said the quickest way of fixing the problem would be to remove the requirement for a visa, while the Refugee Council said Ms Patel's announcement "does not go anywhere near far enough".

Meanwhile, after the Government announced it was sanctioning seven more Russians linked to Vladimir Putin's regime including Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich, Foreign Secretary [*Liz Truss*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liz-truss) said the UK and other allies need to keep up the pressure with further measures - including a freeze on all Russian banking assets.

"We must double down and ramp up the global pressure on Putin. We must go further on sanctions to keep tightening the vice," she said in a speech in Washington.

"We want a situation where they can't access their funds, they can't clear their payments, their trade can't flow, their ships can't dock and their planes can't land."

Her call came as Mr Johnson warned that the "cynical, barbaric" Russian regime appeared to be preparing to use chemical weapons in Ukraine as its forces continued to struggle to make the expected gains in the face of fierce resistance.

"The stuff which your are hearing about chemical weapons is straight out of the Russian playbook," he told Sky News.

"They start saying that there are chemical weapons that are being stored by their opponents or by the Americans, so that when they themselves deploy chemical weapons - as I fear they may - they have a sort of a maskirovka, a fake story, ready to go."

Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine -10 March 2022Find out more about the UK government's response: [*https://t.co/t7F8IGf2fq*](https://t.co/t7F8IGf2fq) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/LpqWb40nRH*](https://t.co/LpqWb40nRH) - Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*March 10, 2022*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1502003531112501249?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

In its latest intelligence assessment, the UK Ministry of Defence said the Russian forces were committing increasing numbers to encircling key cities, reducing the forces to continue their advance which "will further slow Russian progress".

Mr Johnson said that he believed the conflict would only end when Mr Putin accepted he had made "a disastrous miscalculation" and withdrew his forces.

"Vladimir Putin has himself made it very difficult to find an off ramp, and he has, I think, driven his tank, so to speak, down a cul de sac from which it will be very hard to extricate himself but he must," he said.

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UK could welcome hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian refugees, says Javid*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6521-8421-JBNF-W1NY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 21, 2022 Monday 10:47 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 760 words

**Byline:** Gavin Cordon

**Highlight:** The Health Secretary said security checks remain important amid fears Russian agents could try to infiltrate the UK.

**Body**

Britain could welcome hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing the fighting in Ukraine in the coming weeks, [*Health Secretary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/health-secretary) [*Sajid Javid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sajid-javid) has said.

After the Government's [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine scheme opened at the weekend, Mr Javid said those arriving in the UK would get all the support they needed.

His assurance came as the latest intelligence assessment by the UK Ministry of Defence (MoD) warned that Russian forces were seeking to encircle the capital, Kyiv.

Mr Javid defended comments by Home Secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) who insisted security checks were needed on refugees from the war to prevent Russian spies infiltrating the country.

Speaking at the Conservative Spring Forum in Blackpool at the weekend, Ms Patel said it was "naive" to assume that just because most people arriving in the UK were women and children there could not be Kremlin agents among them.

Mr Javid said that while any checks should be "proportionate" the Salisbury nerve agent attack in 2018 underlined the need to be vigilant.

"We saw in our country Russian agents came here with a deadly nerve agent, a chemical weapon, and they used it in Salisbury. We know it killed people and Russia was directly responsible for that," he told Sky News.

"They infiltrated our country with agents, with a chemical weapon, and used it and so it is right there are some level of security checks. We also know that extremists and extremist organisations operate in that region."

Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine -21 March 2022Find out more about the UK government's response: [*https://t.co/o31FnBRw3w*](https://t.co/o31FnBRw3w) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/reAkTEnHFj*](https://t.co/reAkTEnHFj) - Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*March 21, 2022*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1505786552332529665?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Mr Javid said the UK had already issued 9,500 visas to Ukrainians with family ties to the UK, while 150,000 people had expressed in an interested in hosting refugees through the Homes for Ukraine programme."I'm pleased that we are supporting Ukraine in every single way that we can, whether that's military aid, humanitarian aid, or indeed providing sanctuary for those that are fleeing Ukraine," he told LBC."I expect that we will see hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians arrive here in the UK, and they will get all the support that they need."According to the latest MoD assessment, the Russian advance on Kyiv remains stalled in the face of determined Ukrainian resistance with the bulk of Moscow's forces still more than 25km (15 miles) from the centre. Nevertheless, analysts believe the capital is still the Kremlin's main military objective although it is thought the Russians will try to force it into submission through encirclement rather than attempting a direct assault."Forces advancing from the direction of Hostomel to the north-west have been repulsed by fierce Ukrainian resistance," the MoD said."Despite the continued lack of progress, Kyiv remains Russia's primary military objective and they are likely to prioritise attempting to encircle the city over the coming weeks."President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) will hold a conference call with key European leaders - including Boris Johnson - to discuss the latest situation in Ukraine ahead of a Nato summit in Brussels on Thursday.I am appalled by Russian atrocities in Mariupol, including attacks on schools sheltering civilians and the abduction and deportation of Ukrainians.Putin is resorting to desperate measures as he is not achieving his objectives. Putin and his regime will be held to account.- Liz Truss (@trussliz) [*March 20, 2022*](https://twitter.com/trussliz/status/1505602549289787392?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Earlier Foreign Secretary Liz Truss condemned the reported enforced deportation of civilians from the besieged city of Mariupol for transportation to Russia.

On Sunday, the Russians said residents would be allowed to leave the city, which has largely been reduced to rubble by weeks of heavy fighting, if the defenders laid down their arms.

The offer was swiftly rejected by the Ukrainian authorities amid deep distrust over Russian intentions.

Over the weekend, the city authorities said a bomb destroyed an art school where 400 people had taken shelter, with rescuers searching for people possibly trapped under the rubble.

Only days before the shelling, there was a separate attack on a theatre in the city where more than 1,000 people were said to have been seeking shelter.

Ms Truss tweeted: "I am appalled by Russian atrocities in Mariupol, including attacks on schools sheltering civilians and the abduction and deportation of Ukrainians.

"Putin is resorting to desperate measures as he is not achieving his objectives. Putin and his regime will be held to account."

**Load-Date:** March 21, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'I wish this war would end': Ukrainian refugees reach 2.8M*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650J-4NR1-JBNF-W03X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 1:55 PM GMT

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**Length:** 801 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** More than 2.8 million refugees fleeing Russia's war in Ukraine have entered neighboring countries since the invasion began 19 days ago

**Body**

As [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's war in Ukraine becomes a grim new reality for millions of Ukrainians, the tens of thousands who make the increasingly treacherous journey toward safety in the [*European Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/european-union) each day are left with no sense of when, or if, they'll ever return home.

More than 2.8 million people have fled Ukraine in the wake of Russia's invasion, according to the U.N. refugee agency, the vast majority seeking refuge in Poland which has taken in more than 1.7 refugees in the last 19 days.

In the Polish border town of Przemysl, some of those who are fleeing, mostly women and children, are exhausted and express a simple wish that the war and violence would stop.

"All day crying from the pain of having to part with loved ones, with my husband, my parents," said Alexandra Beltuygova, 33, who fled from Dnipro, a city between the embattled metropolises of Kyiv and Mariupol.

"I understand that we may not see them. I wish this war would end," she said.

At a refugee center in Suceava in northern Romania, 28-year-old Lesia Ostrovska watched over her 1-year-old son as her daughter, who is 8, played nearby with other children displaced by the war.

"I left my husband, my father, my mother, my grandparents," said Ostrovska, who is from Chernivtsi in western Ukraine. "It's hard with kids, in the bus, here in this situation ... We hope that the war is finished soon and we can go back home."

As the fighting, now in its third week, continues to exact a grievous human toll in Ukraine with Russian troops bombarding many of the country's most populous cities, the number of those crossing into countries on the eastern edge of the EU has begun to slowly wane in recent days.

In [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) , where around 255,000 refugees have entered so far, only 9,000 people crossed the border with Ukraine on Sunday compared to more than twice that on March 1, according to police.

In Slovakia, where more than 200,000 people have fled, fewer than 9,000 crossed the border on Sunday, down from more than 12,000 four days earlier. And in Poland on Sunday, about 82,000 refugees were admitted, down from an earlier daily peak of around 129,000.

Still, those who managed to flee the violence continued to arrive in countries on Ukraine's western border.

In Przemysl, some recounted being witnesses to military attacks on civilians, something Russia continues to deny.

"I saw destroyed houses and fighting. I saw a lot of tanks when I was driving from Kyiv. I know that a house near us was completely destroyed this morning," said Inessa Armashova, 40, a resident of the Ukrainian capital. "Many people fled. But many cannot leave, sick children or sick elderly people."

The continued push by Russian forces toward Kyiv comes a day after Russia escalated its offensive by launching airstrikes close to the Polish border, raising fears in the West that the fight was edging closer to the EU and members of the NATO military alliance.

Those strikes, which involved waves of deadly Russian missiles hitting a military training base less than 25 kilometers (15 miles) from Ukraine's border with NATO member Poland on Sunday, killed at least 35 people and appeared to be the westernmost target struck during Russia's 19-day invasion of Ukraine.

Residents of the Polish village of Wielkie Oczy, just two kilometers (over a mile) from the border, were jolted awake in the middle of the night by the sounds of the blasts.

"My son went out to the balcony and the neighbors were already awoken and the dogs in the whole village started to bark," said Franciek Sawicki, 77, who heard the missile attack. "We could see the glow above the forest. It was very noisy and I could hear a loud explosion. And at that moment I knew it was an attack near the border."

The proximity of the attack to Poland dashed the sense of safety in western Ukraine, which until now had mostly remained free of Russian attacks, and raised the possibility that the NATO alliance could be drawn into the fight.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called it a "black day," and again urged NATO leaders to establish a no-fly zone over the country, a plea that the West has said could escalate the war to a nuclear confrontation.

But Anjela, 55, a Ukrainian refugee from Poltava who wouldn't give her last name, said after arriving in Poland that only a NATO intervention could bring an end to the violence in Ukraine.

"I don't know when I will see my husband. I don't know when my children will return home," she said. "I beg you, it depends only on you, close the sky, everything else we will do ourselves."

\_\_\_

Justin Spike reported from Budapest, Hungary. Stephen McGrath in Suceava, Romania, Monika Scislowska in Warsaw, Poland, and Karel Janicek in Prague, contributed to this report.

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Follow the AP's coverage of the Ukraine crisis at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: Britain's solidarity with Ukrainian refugees is undermined by the government's Borders Bill*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WS-HNT1-DY4H-K2K2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 1, 2022 Tuesday 2:02 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:1

**Length:** 546 words

**Byline:** Mohamed Omar

**Highlight:** Refugees Welcome: Boris Johnson and Priti Patel's Nationality and Borders Bill is as cowardly in its drafting as it is brutal in its intention

**Body**

The UK prime minister and [*home secretary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-secretary) 's declarations of solidarity with the Ukrainian people are drowned out by their Nationality and Borders Bill, which says the opposite.

For a start, the legislation would do nothing to help the people fleeing Russian invasion. There's nothing that provides more routes for people to find sanctuary here, no commitment to an ambitious long-term refugee resettlement programme, no expansion of family reunion, no plans for humanitarian [*visas*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/visas).

And, under the government's plans, what awaits refugees who do make it here is not the safety they hope for.â¯Instead they will be forced to languish in "reception centres", left in fear of being sent home and possibly offshored to remote former colonies.

On Monday evening, the House of Lords voted down plans to criminalise refugees who arrive across the Channel - and backed an amendment to give people seeking asylum the right to work. The bill will now return to a House of Commons that heavily backed it in its original form. Instead it needs to be torn up and rewritten to help refugees.

After the Second World War, leaders such as Winston Churchill recognised the reality of the situation then - millions displaced and millions more likely to be displaced by the fledgling Cold War. The Refugee Convention they created was a global first to attempt to enshrine protection for people fleeing persecution. It was remarkable because it came from nothing, an international endeavour to find a solution to an international issue for which no framework had existed before. It showed that realism and idealism are not mutually exclusive.

Boris Johnson and Priti Patel's Nationality and Borders Bill is a piece of legislation that is as cowardly in its drafting as it is brutal in its intention.â¯It doesn't help people escaping tyranny and war, it turns our backs on them.

To craft a bill that would help refugees requires facing reality. Government policy appears to be based on the premise that refugee migration can be, or should be, stopped. It cannot be stopped and nor should it be, as long as people displaced across borders need protection.

It also means understanding the routes people take; why some refugees cannot use resettlement programmes; why some are unable to stay in border countries; and why a tiny minority come to the UK (it is not for benefits or hotels).

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment sign up to our free weekly Voices newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

Ministers must abandon the idea that the answer to managing refugee migration lies in the middle of the Channel. They must design a system that meets the needs of the growing number of people who will be forced across borders.

We need this government to show as much concern for Winston Churchill's legacy on the Refugee Convention as it does for his statues. We owed this to the people of Afghanistan yesterday, we owe it to the people of Ukraine today, and we will owe it to those who are displaced in future.

The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) campaign is calling for the UK government to set up a resettlement scheme to give Ukrainians fleeing the invasion sanctuary in Britain

**Load-Date:** March 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine is fighting for rule of law, warns senior cleric*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BSB-4G91-F072-400M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

April 11, 2024 Thursday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 4

**Length:** 1110 words

**Byline:** BEL TREW

**Body**

The bishop for Ukraine in London has urged the UK and the US to "honour their pledges" and not forget that Ukraine is fighting Russia to save the "rule of law and democracy".

In a major intervention, Bishop Kenneth Nowakowski said Ukraine was not asking for soldiers on the ground but for funding to continue fighting Russian president Vladimir Putin.

Two years ago, Russia launched a devastating full-scale invasion of Ukraine, capturing nearly a quarter of the country and displacing more than 10 million people. There are now at least six million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Europe, including around 250,000 in the UK.

"This is not just a battle for Ukraine," the Catholic bishop told The Independent. "It is the battle for rule of law, democracy and freedoms that we have all taken advantage of. That we stand to lose. The challenge for us moving forward is to ensure that those in the US, here and the West continue to encourage politicians to honour their pledges.

"Ukraine has not asked for foreign boots to be put on the ground, they are asking for the instruments to be able to win this battle. But I am optimistic. I look at the brave men and women who are fighting - and I need to be optimistic for them."

His plea came after David Cameron spent the final day of his US trip calling for an escalation of financial support from the US. The foreign secretary met secretary of state Antony Blinken and called for the unlocking of a $60 million military aid package which is currently stalled in Congress.

In a thinly veiled rebuke of Donald Trump's reported idea that Ukraine cede swathes of ground to Russia to enable peace, the foreign secretary warned of the danger of "appeasing" Putin.

Speaking from his parish in central London, Bishop Nowakowski, who has helped thousands of Ukrainians refugees in the capital, said Ukraine's battle is a fight for the UK and the West, which has an obligation to help.

The 65-year-old Canadian of Ukrainian origin, who has spent decades living and working in Ukraine, has spearheaded efforts to welcome thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to London and has been called on during the crisis by the likes of King Charles.

He warned that Ukrainians were exhausted by the two-year brutal war - which if the country loses will mean it "will cease to exist". He said that every family in Ukraine had been impacted in some way and that he had lost 30 friends and colleagues, many of them killed in action while defending their country.

"There cannot be anyone who is of Ukrainian background or who has an association with Ukraine who doesn't know someone who has been killed or impacted," he told The Independent. "I can't imagine anyone who doesn't have someone who has been lost."

Ukraine, which made surprise gains in the first year and half of the war, has in recent months struggled to hold the 1,200km front line, beset by dangerously low ammunition stockpiles often due to crippling delays in delivery of promised aid.

President Volodymyr Zelensky admitted in February that every day, Russian forces fire on average seven times more munitions at Ukrainian forces than they are able to fire back. There are reports that Ukraine has had to ration its forces to firing just 2,000 artillery rounds a day.

Russia, meanwhile, has nearly half a million personnel fighting in Ukraine right now, and has ramped up its domestic production, moving into a "war economy", one Ukrainian diplomat told The Independent.

The bishop said families were at breaking point after suffering so much. Many of them are split up as under martial law, men of fighting are not permitted to leave the country in case they need to be called up. That has left it mostly up to women to travel abroad to sustain their families financially.

"The millions of women who have left Ukraine, some with their children, some without, are feeling those wounds of war," the bishop added. Those who stay in Ukraine are exhausted, he said: "How can you not be tired or exhausted when every night you get woken up by bombs and sirens?"

Many who have fled Ukraine seek solace in the Cathedral of the Holy Family, a first port of call for many desperate ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** on arrival. There, they can get directly connected to British government officials for help with their papers, as well as access to English language lessons, Ukrainian lessons, and therapeutic arts and crafts sessions.

In London, their weekly congregation is now 3,000 strong and they have opened three new parishes in London, as well as 20 additional parishes across England to accommodate the growing numbers. At Easter, they had so many visitors the crowds spilt into the streets outside.

Some of the most powerful people in the UK have come to Bishop Nowakowski to help. He said the then Prince Charles visited just six days after the full-scale invasion erupted, bringing humanitarian aid organisations he was patron of in a show of support to the most vulnerable.

After the coronation, one of King Charles's first visits as monarch was to return to the church to again offer help - alongside his godson the Duke of Westminster, Hugh Grosvenor, who helped renovate the welcome centre. "King Charles told me, 'I'm glad to hear my godson has done something wonderful,'" the bishop added.

Also early in the war, the then prime minister Boris Johnson called on him for advice and visited his parish. "Boris Johnson rolled up his sleeves and said, 'You have 15 minutes to tell me what you think I don't know that I should know,'" he said.

Later, Michael Gove, tasked with managing the UK's response to the crisis, invited him for weekly meetings. The Ukrainian first lady, Olena Zelenska, has also visited him. The bishop thanked the UK for all its work in supporting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, imposing sanctions and helping with aid to Ukraine, adding it was essential the story of Ukraine was kept alive.

In a comparatively recent trip to Ukraine where he went to liberated Irpin, a town in the Kyiv region which experienced a terrifying occupation by Russian soldiers for several weeks earlier in the war, the bishop celebrated Mass.

"It was a beautiful autumn day but very much positioned next to the buildings that were bombed out," he said. "This one woman came up to me and asked what King Charles was like. She said to me, 'When you go back to England please tell people to remember us, even when the story gets a bit old.'"

He said this was his message from the UK. It started with "hope for a better future" so people can start rebuilding their lives. Then he said there was "continued solidarity".

"We have not forgotten, and we shouldn't and can't forget what Ukraine is contributing to our global society," he concluded.

**Load-Date:** April 10, 2024

**End of Document**



[*‘A battle for democracy’: Ukraine bishop urges UK and US to keep supporting fight against Russia*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BS6-VD51-JBNF-W367-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 10, 2024 Wednesday 7:08 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:2

**Length:** 1131 words

**Byline:** Bel Trew

**Highlight:** Ukraine is ‘fighting for rule of law’, warns senior cleric in an interview with Bel Trew as David Cameron urges US to push through stalled aid package

**Body**

The bishop for Ukraine in London has urged the UK and the US to “honour their pledges” and not forget that Ukraine is fighting Russia to save the “rule of law and democracy”.

In a major intervention, Bishop Kenneth Nowakowski said Ukraine was not asking for soldiers on the ground but for funding to [*continue fighting Russian president Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-news-latest-putin-drones-nuclear-b2526352.html).

Two years ago, [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) launched a devastating full-scale invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , capturing nearly a quarter of the country and displacing more than 10 million people. There are now at least six million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Europe, including around 250,000 in the UK.

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“The challenge for us moving forward is to ensure that those in the US, here and the West continue to encourage politicians to honour their pledges.

“Ukraine has not asked for foreign boots to be put on the ground, they are asking for the instruments to be able to win this battle. But I am optimistic. I look at the brave men and women who are fighting – and I need to be optimistic for them.”

His plea came after [*David Cameron*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/cameron-ukraine-russia-war-statement-b2525984.html%22%20title=%22David%20Cameron%20says%20it’s%20possible%20for%20Ukraine%20to%20win%20war%20if%20armed%20with%20‘what%20they%20need’) spent the final day of his US trip calling for an escalation of financial support from the US. [*The foreign secretary met secretary of state Antony Blinken*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/cameron-blinken-washington-dc-press-conference-livefeed-b2525675.html%22%20title=%22Watch%20as%20Cameron%20and%20Blinken%20hold%20joint%20press%20conference%20in%20Washington%20DC) and called for the unlocking of a $60 million military aid package which is currently stalled in Congress.

In a thinly veiled rebuke of Donald Trump’s reported idea that Ukraine cede swathes of ground to Russia to enable peace, [*the foreign secretary warned of the danger of “appeasing” Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/david-cameron-donald-trump-appease-putin-b2526468.html).

Speaking from his parish in central London, Bishop Nowakowski, who has helped thousands of Ukrainians refugees in the capital, said Ukraine’s battle is a fight for the UK and the West, which has an obligation to help.

The 65-year-old Canadian of Ukrainian origin, who has spent decades living and working in Ukraine, has spearheaded efforts to welcome thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to London and has been called on during the crisis by the likes of King Charles.

I can’t imagine anyone who doesn’t have someone who has been lost

Bishop Nowakowski

He warned that Ukrainians were exhausted by the two-year brutal war – which if the country loses will mean it “will cease to exist”.

He said that every family in Ukraine had been impacted in some way and that he had lost 30 friends and colleagues, many of them killed in action while defending their country.

“There cannot be anyone who is of Ukrainian background or who has an association with Ukraine who doesn’t know someone who has been killed or impacted,” he told The Independent.

“I can’t imagine anyone who doesn’t have someone who has been lost.”

Ukraine, which made surprise gains in the first year and half of the war, has in recent months struggled to hold the 1,200km front line, beset by dangerously low ammunition stockpiles often due to crippling delays in delivery of promised aid.

[*President Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) admitted in February that every day, Russian forces fire on average seven times more munitions at Ukrainian forces than they are able to fire back. There are reports that Ukraine has had to ration its forces to firing just 2,000 artillery rounds a day.

Russia, meanwhile, has nearly half a million personnel fighting in Ukraine right now, and has ramped up its domestic production, moving into a “war economy”, one Ukrainian diplomat told The Independent.

The bishop said families were at breaking point after suffering so much. Many of them are split up as under martial law, men of fighting are not permitted to leave the country in case they need to be called up. That has left it mostly up to women to travel abroad to sustain their families financially.

“The millions of women who have left Ukraine, some with their children, some without, are feeling those wounds of war,” the bishop added.

Those who stay in Ukraine are exhausted, he said: “How can you not be tired or exhausted when every night you get woken up by bombs and sirens?”

Many who have fled Ukraine seek solace in the Cathedral of the Holy Family, a first port of call for many desperate ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** on arrival. There, they can get directly connected to British government officials for help with their papers, as well as access to English language lessons, Ukrainian lessons, and therapeutic arts and crafts sessions.

In London, their weekly congregation is now 3,000 strong and they have opened three new parishes in London, as well as 20 additional parishes across England to accommodate the growing numbers. At Easter, they had so many visitors the crowds spilt into the streets outside.

Some of the most powerful people in the UK have come to Bishop Nowakowski to help. He said the then Prince Charles visited just six days after the full-scale invasion erupted, bringing humanitarian aid organisations he was patron of in a show of support to the most vulnerable.

After the coronation, one of [*King Charles*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) ’s first visits as monarch was to return to the church to again offer help – alongside his godson the Duke of Westminster, Hugh Grosvenor, who helped renovate the welcome centre.

“King Charles told me, ‘I’m glad to hear my godson has done something wonderful,’” the bishop added.

Also early in the war, the then prime minister Boris Johnson called on him for advice and visited his parish.

“Boris Johnson rolled up his sleeves and said, ‘You have 15 minutes to tell me what you think I don’t know that I should know,’” he said.

Later, Michael Gove, tasked with managing the UK’s response to the crisis, invited him for weekly meetings. The Ukrainian first lady, Olena Zelenska, has also visited him.

The bishop thanked the UK for all its work in supporting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, imposing sanctions and helping with aid to Ukraine, adding it was essential the story of Ukraine was kept alive.

In a comparatively recent trip to Ukraine where he went to liberated Irpin, a town in the Kyiv region which experienced a terrifying occupation by Russian soldiers for several weeks earlier in the war, the bishop celebrated Mass.

“It was a beautiful autumn day but very much positioned next to the buildings that were bombed out,” he said.

“This one woman came up to me and asked what King Charles was like. She said to me, ‘When you go back to England please tell people to remember us, even when the story gets a bit old.’”

He said this was his message from the UK. It started with “hope for a better future” so people can start rebuilding their lives. Then he said there was “continued solidarity”.

“We have not forgotten, and we shouldn’t and can’t forget what Ukraine is contributing to our global society,” he concluded.

**Load-Date:** April 10, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Dozens of lawmakers urge Biden to clear red tape for Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:655N-SJK1-JBNF-W2B1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 7, 2022 Thursday 5:03 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 729 words

**Byline:** Maria Sacchetti

**Highlight:** White House press secretary Jen Psaki says officials are working on an 'expedited process' to admit war refugees

**Body**

After the White House warned that the war in Ukraine is heading into a protracted new phase, a bipartisan group of lawmakers urged President Joe Biden on Wednesday to untangle red tape that is delaying the arrival of refugees, saying their "life and future" may depend on it.

Sixty-five members of Congress, mostly Democrats and a handful of Republicans, asked the president to extend temporary protected status to thousands of Ukrainians who sought refuge at the nation's ports and borders in recent weeks, expedite immigration processing so that U.S. citizens and green-card holders can bypass the slow-moving refugee program and sponsor their relatives themselves, and waive costly application fees for people who fled, "often with little more than the clothes on their back."

"In facing this humanitarian crisis and the devastating effects of this war, we must use every tool in our toolkit to ensure our country responds by efficiently processing eligible immigration and refugee applications, knowing that each one represents someone fleeing devastation, whose life and future may depend on how rapidly paperwork is processed," the letter said.

Among the signers are Reps. Lloyd Doggett, D-Texas, Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif., Brian Fitzpatrick, R-Pa., Andy Harris, R-Md., Mary Kaptur, D-Ohio, and Mike Quigley, D-Ill.

More than 4 million Ukrainians have fled their country, nearly a 10th of the population, mostly to neighbouring countries such as Poland, Romania and Moldova. The Biden administration said last month that it would take in 100,000 refugees through a variety of legal pathways including the U.S. refugee program and "humanitarian parole," which allows people to quickly enter the country but does not provide permanent protection.

The refugee program offers permanent residency, resettlement aid and other benefits, but the process can take months or years because of required background checks and administrative backlogs. Desperate Ukrainians are increasingly catching flights to Mexico and travelling to the border to plead to be admitted temporarily.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Tuesday that officials are working on an "expedited process" to admit war refugees, calling it "a different process that we'll have more details on soon."

But lawmakers said in the letter that the U.S. government can take administrative steps now to protect refugees.

For instance, while lawmakers praised the Biden administration for announcing that it would grant Ukrainians "temporary protected status," allowing them to live, work and study here for 18 months, they pointed out that only those who were physically present in the United States by March 1 are eligible to apply for it.

Lawmakers said the government should instead tie the eligibility date to the announcement's forthcoming publication in the Federal Register, which would cover the estimated thousands who arrived over the past month.

Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, who granted Ukrainians the protection after the Russian invasion began, told CBS Evening News on Wednesday that nearly 3,000 refugees from Ukraine crossed the Mexican border into the United States last week alone.

Besides extending eligibility for TPS, the lawmakers said the White House could also beef up staffing and resources at U.S. embassies so that American citizens and green-card holders can apply to bring their immediate relatives here.

They said the U.S. government could waive thousands of dollars in immigration application fees, increase the number of embassy workers to process applications, and expand the list of physicians overseas authorized to complete the medical checks required before immigrants can travel to the United States.

Doggett, who led the effort, said in a statement that the appeal "is about easing their burdens through reasonable actions that the Administration should undertake promptly."

"Too many Ukrainians - still shocked by their losses and with minimal resources - are entangled in bureaucratic delays that impair their ability to be united with loved ones in America," he said. "This would prevent some from being stranded for weeks in a foreign land and allow others already here to work and go to school. And this action would give more meaning to President Biden's commitment to admit 100000 Ukrainians seeking refuge."

The Washington Post

**Load-Date:** April 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Rise in Ukrainian refugees without family in Europe and nowhere to go-DEC*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650P-13H1-DY4H-K00H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 15, 2022 Tuesday 1:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 645 words

**Byline:** Jemma Crew

**Highlight:** The number of children arriving into countries alone after fleeing Ukraine is also rising, the Disasters Emergency Committee said.

**Body**

An increasing number of refugees are fleeing Ukraine without family in [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) to help them, while the number of lone children crossing the borders is rising, aid agencies are warning.

The most recent arrivals to countries surrounding Ukraine have few family ties, nowhere to go and are deeply traumatised, according to the [*Disasters Emergency Committee*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/disasters-emergency-committee) (DEC).

And their needs are potentially greater as they have fled the conflict later - at the point when the fighting reached their homes - with fewer possessions or resources, it said.

One DEC charity partner, providing aid in [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , said the fastest-growing group is those who stayed in Ukraine "until they really had no choice but to run".

This compares to earlier cohorts who had predominantly left to join family in Europe.

DEC also warned that neighbouring countries are struggling to keep up with the numbers arriving.

Some £175 million has been raised by DEC's humanitarian appeal, including £25 million matched by the UK Government.

People across Ukraine are in need of humanitarian assistance, from food and water to medical assistance and trauma care. DEC member charities are already responding directly with local partners. Read more: [*https://t.co/g0bYeJW7up*](https://t.co/g0bYeJW7up) - DEC (@decappeal) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/decappeal/status/1503441331674361862?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Madara Hettiarachchi, DEC's director of humanitarian programmes and accountability, said the nature of the crisis is changing.

She said: "The first wave of people who fled the conflict in Ukraine mostly had connections and relatives in neighbouring countries.

"Now the people escaping have few family ties, have nowhere to go and are deeply traumatised from what they have seen and experienced.

"We are also seeing an increase in the number of unaccompanied children, and we can only imagine the fear and turmoil they are feeling."

DEC said children and older people are particularly vulnerable, with many older people travelling with and looking after children.

Natasza Bogacz, who is working with Caritas Poland - a partner of DEC member charity CAFOD, said many of the earliest arrivals joined family in Poland who had fled the conflict in Ukraine in 2014.

She continued: "But now we're seeing people who have stayed in Ukraine until they really had no choice but to run; people who evacuated in a matter of minutes.

"And they very often have no onward destination, nowhere to go. This seems to be the fastest-growing group.

"It's hard because we don't really know what's going to happen to them, especially the older people. Many of them are very vulnerable and weak, but also they're often in a very bad psychological state."

[*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova) has the highest number of refugees in relation to its population - 230,000 refugees in a population of 2.6 million.

Tatiana Sorocan, country director at HelpAge Moldova, said older refugees are unsure about their immediate and longer-term futures.

She said: "We are working hard to give them a sense of stability, while looking after their basic needs.

"Our primary focus is to ensure that they and those they are travelling with have enough cash to be able to buy essentials like food, medication, or warm clothes to protect them against the harsh conditions.

"Many of the older people we are meeting are travelling with children. This care giver role is crucial to the stability of refugee families and means that they need money and aid to support younger members of their family too."

Dan Stewart, Save the Children's head of news on the border with Romania, said one mother told him she and her three children had "two minutes" to pack up their lives and flee.

He said: "[*Children*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/children) are incredibly resilient and they can bounce back from so much, but they need help.

"And that's why we're scaling up rapidly across the region to make sure that more and more children get the emotional support they need to recover."

To donate towards the DEC's appeal, visit: [*www.dec.org.uk*](http://www.dec.org.uk)

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UK will step up pace of admissions for Ukrainian refugees, says Shapps*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YF-KYR1-DY4H-K019-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 9, 2022 Wednesday 10:42 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 682 words

**Byline:** Gavin Cordon

**Highlight:** Labour called for emergency visas for people fleeing the fighting as the Transport Secretary said 760 have been allowed in so far.

**Body**

The [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) is stepping up the pace of admissions for refugees fleeing Ukraine, a Cabinet minister has said, amid continued criticism over delays in issuing visas.

[*Transport Secretary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/transport-secretary) [*Grant Shapps*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/grant-shapps) acknowledged there were "lessons to be learned" in its response to the crisis which has seen more than two million people leave the country to escape the Russian invasion.

He said however that the government of President [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) wanted as many people as possible to remain in the region so they could quickly return to rebuild the country when it is safe to do so.

"President Zelensky and the Ukrainian government have told me that they do not want people to move far away, if at all possible, from the country, because they want people to be able to come back," he told Sky News.

"We are really leaning into this, at the same time respecting Ukraine's wishes, the government's wishes, not to pull people a long way away from Ukraine."

Following fierce criticism from a number of Tory MPs, Mr Shapps said 760 visas have now been granted, with 22,000 applications "on their way through".

"With 6,000 appointments a day available now, you should see the processing rate increase," he told BBC Breakfast.

But shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper said the Government should start issuing emergency visas rather than requiring people to deal with lengthy bureaucracy.

It just beggars belief that people are being asked to do this when they have fled a war zone

Yvette Cooper

"Offer emergency visas that can be issued really swiftly, rather than people having to fill in these 14-page forms or rather than having to upload documents," she told BBC Radio 4's Today programme.

"It just beggars belief that people are being asked to do this when they have fled a war zone, when they have had to leave everything behind, when they have been risking life and limb, in the face of Russian bombardment.

"People shouldn't be treated like this."

Mr Shapps also defended the decision to site a new visa processing centre in northern France in Lille rather than in [*Calais*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/calais) , where many of the refugees hoping to reach the UK have been heading.

"We do not want to see this mixed up with the wider issue of people traffickers and criminal gangs in Calais, so we don't want to attract people to Calais without having the paperwork resolved in the first place before they get there," he told ITV's Good Morning Britain.

After the Government announced on Tuesday that it was banning imports of Russian oil from the end of the year, Mr Shapps acknowledged it would have an impact on the cost of living in the UK.

In a co-ordinated move, President Joe Biden said the US was stopping oil supply from Russia, while the European Union also announced a phasing out of dependence on Moscow's energy.

The actions were praised by President Zelensky who said it sent "a powerful signal to the whole world".

In his daily address to the Ukrainian people, he said: "Either Russia will respect international law and not wage wars, or it will have no money."

Mr Shapps, however, said there would inevitably be economic consequences which would affect people in Britain.

He told LBC: "We are not, fortunately for us, in a position of having air raids and seeing - literally - our children die on the street, the terrible pictures we are seeing in Ukraine.

"Everyone wants to help, we need to stem the flow of Putin's gas and oil blood money from funding his war machine, so I think it's right to cut off their oil.

"But there is an impact, it's a global impact. We have already seen very high price rises."

His comments came as it emerged that ministers were considering steps that could lead to a fracking rethink in the UK as they look to develop alternative sources of energy supply.

Fracking, or hydraulic fracturing, for shale gas has been under a moratorium for more than two years but the move could allow the sites to be opened up at a later date.

Further details are expected when the Government publishes its energy supply strategy in the coming weeks - although it is likely to face fierce opposition from climate change campaigners.

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Gove's refugee resettlement scheme isn't getting results*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6537-WJC1-JCS0-D4FM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 27, 2022 Sunday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 6

**Length:** 700 words

**Byline:** ADAM FORREST

**Body**

Difficulties, delays and lack of detail. These are familiar complaints about the government's handling of the ***Ukraine*** ***refugee crisis***. Like the family visa scheme before it, the sponsorship route isn't working out as planned. Michael Gove is the cabinet minister overseeing the homes for Ukraine scheme, which matches up British sponsors with those fleeing the Russian invasion. The levelling up secretary claimed on 13 March that we would see the first arrivals in "one week's time".

On 16 March the refugee minister Lord Harrington said we would see "thousands" of Ukrainians welcomed into the UK under the scheme in the week ahead. That week has been and gone. And only a trickle of refugees has been able to take up the offer of their British sponsors. The first handful of successful matches emerged this weekend - including one between environment minister Victoria Prentis and 25-year-old Vika, who will stay at the Conservative MP's constituency home.

Organisers at the Sanctuary Foundation, a charity helping coordinate efforts to match hosts and refugees, said they knew of seven Ukrainians who had arrived under the route. Around 150,000 Britons with spare rooms have registered to help. But the majority have not been able to take the next step in the "matching" process.

The government has been criticised for relying on individuals' use of social media - a scenario described as "dating for refugees". Some of those who have been able to connect with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** online are growing frustrated over problems with the complex visa forms required. Volunteer lawyers and charity workers, some of whom have gone to Poland and other neighbouring countries to help refugees with the process, have pointed to a series of problems. Refugees need to upload copies of documents in PDF format, for example, which means families fleeing with little more than shopping bags need access to a PDF converter.

One lawyer told The Independent the sponsorship scheme form had not even been translated into Ukrainian until Thursday, creating further delays. And even those who have matched up, and provided all the necessary documentation, are still waiting to hear whether the visa application is successful. Devon couple ChrisTattersall, 63, and Anne, 62, said they have been communicating with a family stuck in Poland for two weeks. But no progress has been made. "Everything is taking so long ??? every hour somebody is sat there with a child and with a bag is like a week, a day is like a year and almost a month is like a lifetime," said Mr Tattersall.

To complicate matters, sponsors need to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check from their local council before they can welcome a refugee, which can take up to 14 days. Refugee campaigners have said it could be weeks before substantial numbers of people are granted safety in the UK under the scheme. They are calling on the government to accredit leading charities to help match people to ease concerns about amateur Facebook pages, which could leave the process open to unnecessary setbacks and abuse.

But charities argue it would be far easier if the government dropped visa requirements and set up a humanitarian scheme allowing large numbers to come to the UK quickly. This would place responsibility on central government and local authorities to come up with temporary housing solutions.

Meanwhile, some Ukrainians are awaiting "phase two" of the sponsorship scheme, which will be opened up to community groups, charities and churches in the hope such organisations can better take on the cumbersome visa bureaucracy. Grilled on the sluggish pace of the sponsorship scheme, Home Office minister Kit Malthouse admitted this weekend that "we can be quicker". He offered yet another promise when he said, "I guarantee those numbers will accelerate in a week's time."

Mr Gove's levelling up department said it will provide the first number on how many people have arrived through homes for Ukraine next week. It looks almost certain to be very few. Rather than offering more promises, Mr Gove may wish to take a step back and consider whether a visa system designed to control immigration in peacetime is appropriate for a time of war.

**Load-Date:** March 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Across US, faith groups mobilize to aid Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:654T-HYR1-JBNF-W3F6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 3, 2022 Sunday 3:04 PM GMT

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**Length:** 1135 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** U.S. faith communities are leading the charge to welcome refugees displaced by the war in Ukraine

**Body**

As U.S. refugee resettlement agencies and nonprofits nationwide gear up to help Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion and war that has raged for nearly six weeks, members of faith communities have been leading the charge to welcome the displaced.

In [*Southern California*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/southern-california) , pastors and lay individuals are stationing themselves at the Mexico border waving Ukrainian flags and offering food, water and prayer. Around the country, other religious groups are getting ready to provide longer-term support for refugees who will have to find housing, work, health care and schooling.

Aaron Szloboda, an assistant pastor at the Christian church Calvary San Diego, recently spent 50 hours straight at the [*Mexican*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mexican) border handing out food and water to Ukrainians lined up to enter the United States.

Just 10 minutes from the frontier, Calvary San Diego has become something of a hub for newly arrived refugees, a place where they can recuperate after a harrowing journey and plan their next steps.

On Friday its walls were lined with snacks, beverages, dolls and stuffed animals as families arrived clutching duffel bags, suitcases and the hands of small children. They were welcomed inside to rest, eat a meal and check their phones. Volunteers helped them navigate their immediate individual needs: information on flights to New York; how to change euros to dollars; a ride for a friend who had just walked across the border.

Szloboda, whose Hungarian Jewish grandfather survived the Holocaust and lost family members to Nazi genocide, believes he is being called to serve those in dire need: "They're exhausted physically and mentally."

The U.S. has agreed to accept up to 100,000 refugees from Ukraine, which has experienced a flight of more than 4 million people since late February. The Biden administration is also expected to end pandemic-related asylum limits at the U.S.-Mexico border on May 23, caps that have drawn criticism from immigration advocates.

But even before such refugee resettlements begin, faith-based groups have already been helping Ukrainians who have made their way to the United States. Some arrived directly on travel visas. Others traveled to Mexico and then to the U.S. border to claim asylum, enabling them to stay in the U.S. while their cases are processed.

Refugee resettlement agencies can use all the help they can get to accommodate the influx. Deep cuts during the Trump administration led them to slash staffing and programming, and they have already been scrambling to help tens of thousands of Afghans seeking asylum after fleeing last year's Taliban takeover.

"We've started dealing with these crises before there has been a chance to rebuild that infrastructure," said Stephanie Nawyn, associate professor of sociology at Michigan State University who focuses on refugee issues.

"[*Refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) have a lot of needs - homes, jobs, English classes, financial assistance, schools and translators who will help them navigate all of that. That's too much even for a large organization," Nawyn said. "While getting more people of faith to help is great, not having enough resources or case managers is still going to be a problem."

Swiftly providing those kinds of protections and benefits to Ukrainian arrivals is a religious imperative, said Mark Hetfield, president and CEO of the Jewish refugee agency HIAS, one of nine groups that contract with the U.S. State Department on resettlement.

Jewish people are called by their faith to care for and help people in need, Hetfield said, noting that "welcoming the stranger" is mentioned 36 times in the Torah, more often than any other commandment.

"Not because it's the most important but because it's the easiest one to forget or ignore - to love the stranger as yourself," Hetfield said.

HIAS is also welcoming interfaith efforts to help newly arriving refugees, such as one planned partnership in New York City with Buddhist groups.

Columbia University doctoral student Chad DeChant, who belongs to Village Zendo, a Zen community in lower Manhattan, initiated that effort. The group is forming committees to help refugees navigate social services, and once their application to HIAS is approved, they hope volunteers can get trained by the resettlement agency.

Buddhism teaches its adherents to be aware of "the interdependence of all beings," DeChant said, and "the teaching is to not see ourselves as separate from others: Acting compassionately to help others is a core value in all Buddhist traditions."

Minda Schweizer, founder and executive director of Home for Refugees, a Christian nonprofit based in Orange County, California, said resources are sorely needed at the local level where faith-based groups continue helping Afghan refugees who are still finding their way.

"Many Afghan refugees are still in motels because we're in the midst of a housing crisis," Schweizer said.

Matthew Soerens, the U.S. director of church mobilization and advocacy at World Relief, said his organization is eager to welcome more Ukrainians and he has been busy fielding queries from churches about ways to help: Can they host a family? Can they be involved with English tutoring?

"One of our big asks of churches is, 'Can you help us identify landlords or property managers?'" Soerens said. "What we are really struggling with almost everywhere in the country is long-term, permanent, affordable housing."

Meanwhile, as Ukrainians keep arriving at the U.S.-Mexico border, local churches continue to step up.

Bogdan Kipko, pastor at Forward Church, a Baptist congregation in Irvine, California, has been working with churches such as Calvary as well as one Russian church in the San Diego area. Volunteers have been taking refugees to nearby hotels or hosting them in their own homes; after a short stay, those with relatives in the country typically then travel by bus, car or plane to places like [*Sacramento*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sacramento) , where there is a large Ukrainian community.

The bigger challenge will be to connect those in need with long-term services and help them build new lives, Kipko said: "We're trying to help those who have no place to go. We're thinking about their long-term needs."

Kipko and his family arrived in the United States in 1992 after fleeing religious persecution in Kazakhstan, and many of his relatives hail from Ukraine.

"We came here as refugees, and Baptist churches in Washington helped us get on our feet," he said. "I'll never forget that."

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Henao reported from Princeton, New Jersey. Associated Press writers Mariam Fam in Cairo, Peter Smith in Pittsburgh and [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) photographer Gregory Bull in Chula Vista, California, contributed.

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Associated Press religion coverage receives support through the AP's collaboration with The Conversation US, with funding from Lilly Endowment Inc. The AP is solely responsible for this content.

**Load-Date:** April 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees living in UK describe 2022 as ‘perpetual hell’*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:676R-G951-DY4H-K2TT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

December 31, 2022 Saturday 1:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 1172 words

**Byline:** Chris Scott

**Highlight:** Ukrainians living in the UK have spoken to the PA news agency about the last 12 months and their hopes for the year ahead.

**Body**

Ukrainians living in the UK have reflected on the “perpetual hell” of 2022 – which has been filled with sleepless nights checking the news – and spoken of their hopes of having their country back in 2023 and reuniting with their “patriotic” loved ones.

Since Ukraine was invaded by [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) in February, the UN estimates that seven million Ukrainians have been internally displaced, while millions have fled the country to find safety elsewhere.

[*Data*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/data) from the Home Office revealed that, as of August 15 2022, more than 115,000 Ukraine Scheme visa-holders had arrived in the UK under the Ukraine Family Scheme and Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme ([*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine).

The Ukraine Family Scheme allowed fleeing Ukrainians to join or accompany a UK-based family member, while the Homes for Ukraine scheme matched Ukrainians with someone in the UK willing to sponsor them and provide suitable accommodation for a minimum of six months.

For Valentina Butenko, a 19-year-old student who was studying at the University of Central London at the start of the year, “2022 has been perpetual hell”.

“This is probably going to sound very strange, but it’s also a year that I realised how lucky I am to be able to have things that I really love, and that I’m willing to fight for and protect,” she told the PA news agency.

Ms Butenko, who has a British mother and a Ukrainian father, made the decision to return to her family home in [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) shortly before the war began and swapped studying for her degree for learning how to administer first aid and fire a gun.

“You have this building sense of an immense responsibility to something that really matters to you and you’re afraid of losing. But you can’t quite grasp what that responsibility is,” she said.

“I remember, the week before the invasion, I had a conversation with my father about what would happen and what we would do.

“We both settled on the idea that if the war happened we had to stay and we had to support Ukraine. I felt we couldn’t leave.”

Since the war began, Ms Butenko has worked with her father getting people to safety in the west of Ukraine or out of the country altogether, and spoke about one occasion when the pair got trapped in the middle of an aerial bombardment a few weeks into the invasion, as were moving people out of Kyiv.

“The place we were staying, there was no bomb shelter and it didn’t have a basement,” Ms Butenko said.

“There were air sirens. You could hear explosions happening. And I thought ‘Oh my god, if something actually falls, that’s it’.

“I think it’s the helplessness for me, that’s the scariest feeling.”

Despite this, she said that risking her life for her country has been worth it.

“The way I dealt with the scariest moments was thinking ‘I’m doing this for Ukrainians’.

“Every time I go back to Kyiv, there’s just incredible optimism. [*People*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/people) just get on with their life and fight for it.

“And I think that actually just gives such a richness to life, understanding there is nothing – no hell, no dictator and no army – that can break your willingness to live.”

Ms Butenko – who flies back to the UK every few weeks to pick up supplies and medicine for people back home on the front line – added that being in the UK can sometimes be more frightening that being in Ukraine.

“The one habit I kind of got into in Ukraine is that I didn’t sleep. Every few hours, I would wake up to check the news,” she said.

“I needed to know, have they taken Kyiv? Do we still have a country? And I think my body’s gotten quite used to waking up every few hours. And I desperately check the news.

“To be completely honest, it is much scarier for me reading about bombings sitting in London than actually being there when it’s happening.”

February 24 – the day Russia invaded Ukraine – is etched into Ms Butenko’s mind.

“I vividly remember waking up to something that sounded like an explosion, and I just instinctively knew ‘Oh my god, it’s begun’,” she recalled.

“I looked at the news and they said that the first bombs had been dropped on Kyiv. And it was kind of a very intense sense of fear, a sense there is a possibility that I might not have a country tomorrow.”

They're basically kids, but they need to be in Ukraine because it's our law. It's very tragic to see kids who need to start their life, need to make their own decisions, suffer from all the things that are going on

Anna Tysovska

Anna Tysovska, who worked for a beauty products company in Kyiv and fled Ukraine a few weeks after the war began, also spoke about her memories of the day Russia invaded.

“Until I heard the first bombing, I couldn’t believe there was going to be a war,” the 32-year-old told PA.

“I was in denial for a long time.”

Ms Tysovska came to the UK in April with her mother, aunt and cousin. They were forced to leave their male relatives and friends behind after Ukraine banned men aged 18-60 from leaving the country due to the war effort.

“My dad is 55 and, obviously, he will not leave,” she said.

“He’s really very passionate and he’s patriotic to Ukraine, but I don’t want him to fight because I know how bad things are on the front line.

“My cousin, she’s 17, and finished school last year. A lot of boys, ex-classmates, can’t leave Ukraine because they are 18.

“They’re basically kids, but they need to be in Ukraine, because it’s our law. It’s very tragic to see kids who need to start their life, need to make their own decisions, suffer from all the things that are going on.”

Ms Tysovska and her family moved in with a host family in Cornwall in April as part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

After a few months, she enrolled in a Masters programme at the local university, which she hopes can help her country from afar.

“I always wanted to get my Masters in psychology,” she said.

“I will hopefully write my dissertation on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and I will try to help the people of Ukraine living in the UK who suffer from PTSD.

“But actually, you know, I think every Ukrainian will suffer from PTSD so I would like to help in any way I can.”

She added that she wants to go “home”, despite loving the UK.

“I want to go back to Ukraine. I want to build my future there. I want to help to rebuild my country.”

As for Ms Butenko, she has one big hope for 2023.

“I want us to win this war,” she said.

“And I really mean win. I don’t just mean I want this war to end – I want us to win this war, and claim back all our territory. Because a lot of us, a lot of Ukrainians, have sacrificed a lot for this.”

Ms Tysovska said: “My hope for next year is first of all (Russian President Vladimir) Putin will die. Then we will celebrate our victory in the Khreshchatyk Street (the main street in Kyiv).”

She also hopes to celebrate a milestone back in Ukraine.

“I want to celebrate my birthday next year in Ukrainian Crimea,” she said.

“I want everyone to have their country back. I want Russia to repay for everything they’ve done. It can’t be repaid obviously, but that’s what I want.

“And I want Ukrainian kids to live in a peaceful country. They deserve it because their childhoods were stolen.”

**Load-Date:** December 30, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Swiss ‘millionaire’s playground’ plays host to Ukraine refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:697R-GSS1-JBNF-W4DR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

September 24, 2023 Sunday 12:36 PM GMT

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**Section:** PHOTOGRAPHY,CULTURE; Version:1

**Length:** 695 words

**Byline:** Paddy Dowling

**Highlight:** Ukrainians seeking sanctuary in a Swiss monastery experience the sheer complexity of life having lost everything, now refugees in the shadows of a super-rich society. Paddy Dowling reports from Switzerland

**Body**

Zug, [*Switzerland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/switzerland) ’s wealthiest canton, is famous for its flawless alpine vistas and low taxes. And here in the rolling hills sits Kloster Menzingen monastery, a temporary home to 160 ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) who have fled their war-torn country.

“They were bombing my city last night,” explains law graduate Hana, 28, from Odesa, as she walks along the gloomy corridor in the southern wing of the convent.

“This is our life, waking up to news that our towns and cities are once more under siege,” she says.

The exclusive and perfectly manicured district, where [*one in eight of its residents is a millionaire*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-04-25/in-these-swiss-cantons-one-in-eight-people-are-millionaires) , was by the end of July host to 2,333 refugees and asylum seekers from 55 different nationalities including 828 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Ukrainians in Switzerland have been granted asylum provisionally, to stay and work, under a fast-tracked permit ‘S’ status, reserved for people in need of special protection. However, when the war ends, they must return.

Notwithstanding, all residents at Kloster Menzingen will be uprooted once more to a repurposed modular facility, 12km away, which will provide shelter for up to 400 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

The wing at the monastery, which has been their spiritual sanctuary for more than a year, is closing for renovation and conversion into apartments.

Christian Murbach, at the Zug Cantonal Social Welfare Office, explains: “Renewing leases on existing facilities, or finding and or building new asylum accommodation in a tense housing market, is becoming increasingly difficult”.

Living in Switzerland’s Disneyland for the rich is expensive, even for those earning reasonable salaries. At the monastery, Ukrainians each receive around £175 social welfare per month – in addition to core expenses provided by the canton – explained they simply couldn’t afford to buy anything.

Tatiana, who arrived in Switzerland from Odesa eight months pregnant, explains she could never have afforded the ‘five-star’ Swiss medical treatment she received when she gave birth to baby Viktoria. “The canton has been so kind and welcoming with all the children,” she adds.

Menzingen monastery allocated a playroom solely for children, brightly decorated with six-foot-high cartoon murals.

And for those unaccompanied minors arriving into the canton from Afghanistan, they have been provided with a 30-bed alpine lodge on Mount Zugerberg, equipped with an open plan kitchen, gymnasium, games room and bedrooms, all with breathtaking views towards the snow-capped mountains of the Swiss Alps.

This is a stark contrast to the UK, where government ministers ordered the removal of child-friendly images in asylum centres for those children arriving unaccompanied, because they were “too welcoming”.

Most governments across Europe, reeling after Covid, were caught off guard by the Ukrainian refugee crisis and the speed at which the 7.1 million people (UNHCR) spilled across porous borders.

And, despite being immensely well-heeled, cantons like Zug were no better prepared. They were challenged; logistically by a shortage of accommodation, and beneath the polished veneer of pleasantries in society, a very steep decline in public sympathy toward all refugees.

As the conflict drags on, well into its second year – even Murbach concedes “we are at a tipping point now with regards to support for the [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) crisis, and it’s even worse for Afghanis and Syrians, for example”.

This explains why; to plan, consult and build new asylum premises replacing existing ones like Steinhausen in Zug, where “non-***Ukrainian***” ***refugees*** still live six-to-a-room, can take six years.

With the global migrant crisis already having a profound impact on the European continent, and the next big flow an inevitability, regions like Zug are perhaps concerned – “if they build it, they [refugees] will come”.

Hanna, from Odesa, was forced against her will by her family to leave her old life in Ukraine where she had everything and asked for nothing concludes: “I honestly don’t know how I feel about anything anymore. I sit on my bed here shaking my head in disbelief thinking, I used to sit on my own bed watching Netflix in my own apartment, and in my own country. And now I am a refugee.”

**Load-Date:** September 24, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Numbers of refugees, asylum-seekers increase in Germany*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6795-M0B1-DY4H-K3XY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

January 11, 2023 Wednesday 4:08 PM GMT

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**Length:** 235 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** More than 244,000 people have applied for asylum in Germany last year and more than 1 million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have come to the country looking for shelter from Russia’s war

**Body**

More than 244,000 people applied for asylum in [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) last year, and more than 1 million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** came to the country looking for shelter from [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's war, the government said Wednesday.

The No. 1 country of origin for asylum-seekers was [*Syria*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/syria) , followed by Afghanistan, Turkey and Iraq. ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** don’t need to apply for asylum, because they immediately received temporary residency status.

Compared to 2021, the number of asylum-seekers went up last year by 27.9%. Especially during the last three months of 2022, numbers increased as asylum-seekers tried to reach Germany through the Balkan route.

Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's “war of aggression against Ukraine has triggered the largest flight movement in Europe since World War II," German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser said, thanking Germans for welcoming refugees from Ukraine with overwhelming support.

“In other parts of the world, too, people are fleeing war and terror, as reflected in the significant increase in the number of asylum applications filed in 2022,” Faeser added.

She said that the government was trying to integrate those who arrive in Germany faster than in the past by offering language classes immediately, among other measures. The government is also trying to speed up deportations of those whose asylum pleas are rejected.

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Follow AP’s coverage of migration issues at [*https://apnews.com/hub/migration*](https://apnews.com/hub/migration)

**Load-Date:** January 11, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Bus drivers wanted to help Briton bring more Ukrainian refugees to Poland*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:653X-VKB1-JBNF-W2W6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 30, 2022 Wednesday 10:00 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 744 words

**Byline:** Jemma Crew

**Highlight:** Cliff Wilson bought a 56-seat bus which he is using to take hundreds of women, children and babies to safety.

**Body**

A [*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) volunteer who bought a bus and is ferrying hundreds of Ukrainian women and children across the border to [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) is appealing for more drivers so he can bring additional refugees to safety.

For the past three weeks, Cliff Wilson has been helping Ukrainians make the 12-hour journey from Uman, in the centre of Ukraine, to Medyka, a border town in Poland.

The father-of-one, originally from a village near [*Poole*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poole) , [*Dorset*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dorset) , spent 25,000 euro (£21,200) on a bright yellow 56-seat bus he purchased in [*Prague*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prague) in early March.

He has since helped almost 200 refugees - mainly women, children and babies but also some elderly men - and pets including a cat and two rabbits to safety with bus driver Niall Gordon, who lives in Sheffield.

The 36-year-old is now appealing for "willing and able drivers" who hold a UK bus licence to get in touch as he hopes to expand the fleet to five buses and make more frequent trips to help refugees.

It's amazing how quiet they all are. There's almost no crying from any of them, which is probably testament to some of their shock

Cliff Wilson

He told the PA news agency he decided to purchase the bus because "being a father myself of a young boy, I wanted to do whatever I could do most effectively to help those people suffering".

He called the refugees he has been transporting "a real inspiration", adding he can "visibly see and feel the fear, the amount of stress that they're under".

He said: "They're saying goodbye to family members and not knowing the next time they're going to see them. So (there's) a lot of tears, shock, confusion. The first few hours on board the bus were, you know, basically silent.

"People could be crying for hours into the journey. So pretty sad, but then as we get moving some relief starts forming as well, and we start building up more of a bond and a trust, and we make sure they're really well looked after - chocolate, for example, they might not have seen for weeks, and that's always a mood brightener."

Mr Wilson, a language communication coach in the European Parliament who lives in Brussels, has also been using the bus to take vital aid across the border, such as medicine, water, sleeping bags, mattresses, backpacks, nappies and sanitary products.

Those he has helped on the return journey back to Poland include around 76 children and 12 babies, with the youngest just five months old.

He said: "It's amazing how quiet they all are. There's almost no crying from any of them, which is probably testament to some of their shock."

The bus, decked out with blue seats and yellow curtains on the inside, has a microwave and kettle so refugees can have hot meals and babies warm milk.

There are also charging cables for passengers' phones, and they are given croissants, fruit and chocolate bars upon boarding.

Cliff & Niall have helped 86 Women, 76 Children and 12 infants with free passage out of the war-ravaged Ukraine. The volunteer effort is funded by the team & donations, help us save more lives! [*#BusesForUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/BusesForUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#StandForUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandForUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Donations can be made here [*https://t.co/DME8KKrv1p*](https://t.co/DME8KKrv1p) [*pic.twitter.com/aV85cdpGTE*](https://t.co/aV85cdpGTE) - Danielle Turkov Wilson (@DanielleZena) [*March 22, 2022*](https://twitter.com/DanielleZena/status/1506265187741057026?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Mr Wilson has fundraised around 8,000 euro (£6,700), which has helped with running costs so far, including the 900 euro (£763) it costs to fill up the tank with diesel for the 24-hour return journey, and he is hoping to get further funding.

On Thursday he will head out with a new driver, Martyn Dunn, from Derby, for a fifth trip and is planning to continue helping for another month.

Mr Dunn, 39, who runs a pub in Derby, said: "I'm a little bit apprehensive, but it's a new experience, a new challenge and doing the right thing."

Mr Wilson told PA he has not seen a particularly co-ordinated effort from the UK, and called for more boots on the ground to support refugees.

He said: "I would like to see more of an effort to match some of our European neighbours that are more readily helping, and willing to provide refuge for these in need and suffering people."

He said the number of people given UK visas so far "seem to be quite pitiful", and called on the UK Government to speed up the process.

He added: "I think the numbers are tiny.

"And I think, although we're no longer a member of the European Union, we still are within the continent a country that can offer a lot more, that can also and should also do more to support those that suffer and those in need. So I hope we see an improvement."

**Load-Date:** March 30, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Concern grows over traffickers targeting Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6503-63N1-DY4H-K1J2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 12, 2022 Saturday 8:51 AM GMT

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**Length:** 1441 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** As millions of women and children flee across Ukraine's borders in the face of Russian aggression, concerns are growing over how to protect the most vulnerable refugees from being targeted by human traffickers or becoming victims of other forms of exploitation

**Body**

One man was detained in [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) suspected of raping a 19-year-old refugee he'd lured with offers of shelter after she fled war-torn Ukraine. Another was overheard promising work and a room to a 16-year-old girl before authorities intervened.

Another case inside a refugee camp at Poland's Medyka border, raised suspicions when a man was offering help only to women and children. When questioned by police, he changed his story.

As millions of women and children flee across Ukraine's borders in the face of Russian aggression, concerns are growing over how to protect the most vulnerable refugees from being targeted by human traffickers or becoming victims of other forms of exploitation.

"Obviously all the refugees are women and children," said Joung-ah Ghedini-Williams, the UNHCR's head of global communications, who has visited borders in Romania, Poland and [*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova).

"You have to worry about any potential risks for trafficking - but also exploitation, and sexual exploitation and abuse. These are the kinds of situations that people like traffickers ... look to take advantage of," she said.

The U.N. refugee agency says more than 2.5 million people, including more than a million children, have already fled war-torn Ukraine in what has become an unprecedented humanitarian crisis in Europe and its fastest exodus since World War II.

In countries throughout Europe, including the border nations of Romania, Poland, Hungary, Moldova and Slovakia, private citizens and volunteers have been greeting and offering help to those whose lives have been shattered by war. From free shelter to free transport to work opportunities and other forms of assistance - help isn't far away.

But neither are the risks.

[*Police*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/police) in WrocÅaw, Poland, said Thursday they detained a 49-year-old suspect on rape charges after he allegedly assaulted a 19-year-old Ukrainian refugee he lured with offers of help over the internet. The suspect could face up to 12 years in prison for the "brutal crime," authorities said.

"He met the girl by offering his help via an internet portal," police said in a statement. "She escaped from war-torn Ukraine, did not speak Polish. She trusted a man who promised to help and shelter her. Unfortunately, all this turned out to be deceitful manipulation."

Police in Berlin warned women and children in a post on social media in Ukrainian and Russian against accepting offers of overnight stays, and urged them to report anything suspicious.

Tamara Barnett, director of operations at the [*Human Trafficking Foundation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/human-trafficking-foundation) , a U.K.-based charity which grew out of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Human Trafficking, said that such a rapid, mass displacement of people could be a "recipe for disaster."

"When you've suddenly got a huge cohort of really vulnerable people who need money and assistance immediately," she said, "it's sort of a breeding ground for exploitative situations and sexual exploitation. When I saw all these volunteers offering their houses ... that flagged a worry in my head."

The Migration Data Portal notes that humanitarian crises such as those associated with conflicts "can exacerbate pre-existing trafficking trends and give rise to new ones" and that traffickers can thrive on "the inability of families and communities to protect themselves and their children."

Security officials in Romania and Poland told The Associated Press that plain-clothed intelligence officers were on the lookout for criminal elements. In the Romanian border town of Siret, authorities said men offering free rides to women have been sent away.

Human trafficking is a grave human rights violation and can involve a wide range of exploitative roles. From sexual exploitation - such as prostitution - to forced labor, from domestic slavery to organ removal, and forced criminality, it is often inflicted by traffickers through coercion and abuse of power.

A 2020 human trafficking report by the European Commission, the EU's executive branch, estimates the annual global profit from the crime is 29.4 billion euros ($32 billion). It says that sexual exploitation is the most common form of human trafficking in the 27-nation bloc and that nearly three-quarters of all victims are female, with almost every fourth victim a child.

Madalina Mocan, committee director at ProTECT, an organization that brings together 21 anti-trafficking groups, said there are "already worrying signs," with some refugees being offered shelter in exchange for services such as cleaning and babysitting, which could lead to exploitation.

"There will be attempts of traffickers trying to take victims from Ukraine across the border. Women and children are vulnerable, especially those that do not have connections - family, friends, other networks of support," she said, adding that continued conflict will mean "more and more vulnerable people" reaching the borders.

At the train station in the Hungarian border town of Zahony, 25-year-old Dayrina Kneziva arrived from Kyiv with her childhood friend. Fleeing a war zone, Kneziva said, left them little time to consider other potential dangers.

"When you compare ... you just choose what will be less dangerous," said Kneziva, who hopes to make it to Slovakia's capital of Bratislava with her friend. "When you leave in a hurry, you just don't think about other things."

A large proportion of the refugees arriving in the border countries want to move on to friends or family elsewhere in Europe and many are relying on strangers to reach their destinations.

"The people who are leaving Ukraine are under emotional stress, trauma, fear, confusion," said Cristina Minculescu, a psychologist at Next Steps Romania who provides support to trafficking victims. "It's not just human trafficking, there is a risk of abduction, rape ... their vulnerabilities being exploited in different forms."

At Romania's Siret border after a five-day car journey from the bombed historical city of Chernihiv, 44-year-old Iryna Pypypenko waited inside a tent with her two children, sheltering from the cold. She said a friend in Berlin who is looking for accommodation for her has warned her to beware of possibly nefarious offers.

"She told me there are many, very dangerous propositions," said Pypypenko, whose husband and parents stayed behind in Ukraine. "She told me that I have to communicate only with official people and believe only the information they give me."

Ionut Epureanu, the chief police commissioner of Suceava county, told the AP at the Siret border that police are working closely with the country's national agency against human trafficking and other law enforcement to try to prevent crimes.

"We are trying to make a control for every vehicle leaving the area," he said. "A hundred people making transport have good intentions, but it's enough to be one that isn't ... and tragedy can come."

Vlad Gheorghe, a Romanian member of the European Parliament who launched a Facebook group called United for Ukraine that has more than 250,000 members and pools resources to help refugees, including accommodation, says he is working closely with the authorities to prevent any abuses.

"No offer for volunteering or stay or anything goes unchecked, we check every offer," he said. "We call back, we ask some questions, we have a minimal check before any offer for help is accepted."

At Poland's Medyka border, seven former members of the French Foreign Legion, an elite military force, are voluntarily providing their own security to refugees and are on the lookout for traffickers.

"This morning we found three men who were trying to get a bunch of women into a van," said one of the former legionnaires, a South African who gave only his first name, Mornay. "I can't 100% say they were trying to recruit them for sex trafficking, but when we started talking to them and approached them - they got nervous and just left immediately."

"We just want to try and get women and kids to safety," he added. "The risk is very high because there are so many people you just don't know who is doing what."

Back at her tent on the Siret border, Pypypenko said people were offering help - but she wasn't sure who she could trust.

"[*People*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/people) just enter and tell us that they can take us for free to France," she said. "Today we are for three hours here ... and we had two or three propositions like that. I couldn't even imagine such a situation, that such a big tragedy could be the field of crime."

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AP journalists Renata Brito in Siret, Romania; Vanessa Gera in Warsaw, Poland; Monika Scislowska in Przemysl, Poland; Justin Spike and Bela Szandelszky in Zahony, Hungary; and Florent Bajrami in Medyka, Poland, contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** March 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UK-based couple rent entire Polish hotel to create hub for Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651T-M4D1-JBNF-W348-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 20, 2022 Sunday 12:48 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 664 words

**Byline:** Alistair Mason

**Highlight:** 'We cannot carry on keep drinking tea and thinking about the crisis - we need to act now.'

**Body**

A UK-based couple have hired out an entire hotel in Poland to create a hub for refugees fleeing the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Jakub and Gosia Golata, who immigrated to the UK in 2004, have teamed up with the [*Polish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/polish) arm of the Sue Ryder charity to take over the Park Hotel Tryszczyn near Bydgoszcz, where Ukrainians can come to stay while they are placed with local host families.

Mr Golata, 42, told the PA news agency he was keen to take immediate action because help was not getting to the right places quickly enough.

He said: "We cannot carry on keep drinking tea and thinking about the crisis - now we've got hundreds of thousands people exposed to potential abuse and sleeping rough.

"We need to act now."

Mr Golata, who works on the [*HS2*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hs2) rail project as a logistics manager, has lived with his wife in [*Barrow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/barrow) upon [*Humber*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/humber) in North Lincolnshire for much of the last two decades.

His wife, a serving officer with [*Lincolnshire Police*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lincolnshire-police) , is currently on sabbatical while she cares for her mother in Poland, so soon after the Russian invasion began he travelled to join her and to try to help with the humanitarian effort.

Mr Golata said: "I thought 'I need to engage and I need to help as much as I can', but I wasn't really sure how I could help.

"So firstly I thought 'I need to see it with my own eyes' to see how can I help with my knowledge, skills and experience - how can I help?"

Initially Mr Golata drove a minibus eight hours to the border, picked up refugees and found friends and family who were happy to host them.

However, after doing this a few times he felt he needed to do more.

He said: "I came up with this idea that if I would be able to rent an entire hotel and place these vulnerable mothers and children in a hotel, and then allow them to settle, feel safe, looked after and be able to come to terms what's happening, then that that would be the best thing.

"And that would also allow me to find the local community volunteers so they can be taken care of a bit more."

He received backing from his bosses at Skanska in the UK, who contributed funds as well as giving Mr Golata time to work on the project, and also linked up with the Polish arm of Sue Ryder to help with fundraising.

He found a 180-bed hotel, which had closed because of the Covid pandemic, that was happy to be involved, and then used his own money to help them get running again and prepare for the arrival of the refugees.

Mr Golata then drove a 48-seater bus to the border where he picked up a number of families fleeing the violence and brought them to the hotel - focusing particularly on those from eastern parts of Ukraine where much of the worst of the violence has been.

"It was mentally very challenging because the mothers were crying - they were uncertain about what's going to happen," he said.

Once at the hub, he aims to match the refugees with local households who are happy to take them in for a longer period.

They will continue to provide whatever support they can, even once the refugees have moved on.

"This refugee hubs basically provides the refugees safety and security that should the Polish family not be right for them or vice versa, they've got the refugee hub to go back to," he said.

"It's a risk reduction and also a support for both, so much as we are worrying about the refugees we are also worrying about the adopting families, because they also need support."

Ultimately he hopes the hub will be taken over by government and the model replicated in towns all over Poland, where more than two million Ukrainians have fled so far, according to the UN.

But for now Mr Golata is working to do his bit in helping with the "huge crisis".

"We need financial support now so we can protect the vulnerable families from human trafficking, from any form of abuse - that's why this is needed now.

"Later, governments will step in and people will settle and things will be much better, but now we are in this huge crisis."

To donate, head to [*www.gofundme.com/f/ukrainian-refugee-hub-in-poland*](http://www.gofundme.com/f/ukrainian-refugee-hub-in-poland)

**Load-Date:** March 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*The UK's grudging stance toward Ukrainian refugees could backfire on Johnson*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y6-KG01-JCS0-D504-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 8, 2022 Tuesday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 5

**Length:** 802 words

**Byline:** ANDREW WOODCOCK POLITICAL EDITOR

**Body**

Boris Johnson has claimed the UK is taking a "very generous and open approach" towards the 1.7 million Ukrainians who have fled their country to escape Vladimir Putin's brutal assaults on civilians.

The scale of the British response, however, is coming under increasingly intense scrutiny after Home Office figures indicated at the weekend that only 50 UK visas had been issued.

There was confusion in Whitehall yesterday as the prime minister suggested the figure was wrong, but could not provide a more accurate number.

Suggestions from home secretary Priti Patel that she was considering a new humanitarian route for victims of the conflict also turned out to be misleading as the Home Office and No 10 clarified that she was referring to existing schemes.

It is understood that around 10,000 Ukrainians had applied to come to the UK. The government insisted it is working through the backlog as quickly as possible, but offered no indication of how soon applicants can expect a decision.

With Poland opening its borders, taking in 1 million Ukrainians, and the EU offering them freedoms to travel, settle and work across the 27-nation bloc, the UK's response is increasingly looking ungenerous and sluggish.

Smaller countries on Ukraine's borders have taken in far more refugees than Britain, with 180,000 in Hungary, 130,000 in Slovakia and around 80,000 each in Romania and Moldova, according to UN figures. More than 183,000 people have moved on from these countries to other destinations in Europe.

France's interior minister Gerald Darmanincondemned Britain for a "totally inadequate response" and "lack of humanity" after Ukrainians trying to reach the UK were turned back at Calais.

At the outset of the Ukrainian crisis, the EU immediately agreed to let in refugees for up to three years without first having to seek asylum.

And last week, the bloc agreed to invoke for the first time the Temporary Protection Directive created at the time of the 2001 Kosovo crisis.

This allows Ukrainians to move freely across the EU, giving them instant rights to live and work within the bloc, along with access to social service benefits like housing and medical care. Under the directive, Ukrainians are also granted temporary residency status without undergoing the complicated procedures for asylum.

In contrast, the UK has targeted specific groups of Ukrainians for assistance and has refused to lift the requirement for visas to enter Britain.

A Ukraine Family Scheme launched last month for relatives of UK residents was initially available only to spouses or partners, children aged under 18 or parents of under-18s, with the government estimating it could see up to 100,000 people come to Britain.

This was later extended to wider family, including grandparents, siblings, children aged over 18 and parents of over-18s, increasing the group potentially eligible to around 200,000.

Entry requirements for English language skills and minimum salary were waived, but applicants were still told to provide documentation such as marriage or birth certificates. However, the Home Office made clear it was willing to consider applications without such papers from people who had fled their homes in fear for their lives.

There have been complaints that refugees were told to submit their applications at UK visa processing centres such as embassies and consulates, meaning long journeys and delays for many of those hoping to come to the UK.

With no centre in Calais, Ukrainians reaching the Channel have been told to go to Paris or Brussels to stake their claims.

A second scheme, the Humanitarian Sponsorship Pathway, will allow access to Ukrainians with no relatives in the UK who can find sponsors - such as councils, charities or businesses - able to support them and provide accommodation during their stay.

No date has yet been set for this route to open, and eligibility requirements are not yet known.

Meanwhile, Ukrainians already in the UK on work and short visit visas have been told they can extend them.

Johnson and Patel have fiercely resisted demands to lift the requirement for visas altogether, arguing this would create a security risk and undermine public support in the UK for the offer of sanctuary.

Patel said Russian troops were "seeking to infiltrate" Ukrainian forces and there were "extremists on the ground" in Ukraine.

Given Putin's "willingness to do violence on British soil", Patel said, "we cannot suspend any security or biometric checks on people we welcome to our country".

As TV screens fill with scenes of civilians being deliberately targeted by Russian troops, the UK's stance risks appearing grudging and inadequate. The government risks being forced into repeated U-turns as it gradually amends and extends its offer of help to people who have no time to spare in finding a safe haven from war.

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*The Independent's campaign to welcome Ukrainian refugees is a proud moment - but a sobering one*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WC-XD31-DY4H-K1RY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 27, 2022 Sunday 10:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** EDITOR'S LETTERS,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:1

**Length:** 534 words

**Byline:** Victoria Richards

**Highlight:** Refugees Welcome: It can feel frustrating at times like this, not knowing how we can help or make a positive difference, and wanting to avoid centring ourselves in the narrative of war, writes Victoria Richards

**Body**

In 2015, my colleagues at The Independent and I were in the newsroom, fielding calls from correspondents, charities and eyewitnesses, each reporting on one terrible and terrifying thing - the number of refugees fleeing Syria.

It felt, then, as though public sentiment had finally come together - that our empathy had widened, collected around the shocking photograph of the body of little Alan Kurdi, washed up dead on a Turkish beach, which was splashed across so many newspaper front pages. He was three years old. My daughter was also three years old when Alan died. The stark horror of that image has never left me.

[*Alan's brother, Galip, aged five, and their mother, Rihan, also died*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/aylan-kurdis-story-how-a-small-syrian-child-came-to-be-washed-up-on-a-beach-in-turkey-10484588.html) when their small dinghy capsized on route to the Greek island of Kos after they had fled the Syrian city of Kobani. The family had dreamed of joining Alan's aunt Teema in Canada. Their story, despite its raw and searing tragedy, was far from unique - and neither was it the last of its kind. Since then, we've carried scores of reports of people lost at sea in the Channel after attempting to reach sanctuary in Europe by way of overcrowded, unsuitable boats.

So, seven years ago, on the news desk at The Independent we devised a campaign to try to help those displaced by war, and a hashtag to spread the news more widely on social media - #RefugeesWelcome. It had a noticeable effect: [*more than 100,000 people signed our petition*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/refugees-welcome-100-000-sign-independent-petition-calling-for-britain-to-take-its-fair-share-10484931.html) calling for Britain to "take its fair share" of people fleeing violence and persecution.

Now, we are here again, [*pushing out our campaign*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/ukrainian-refugees-fleeing-war-b2024051.html) - centred this time on Ukraine, currently subject to invasion by Russia. At the time of writing, we are on day four of war in Europe. Many of us are watching with horror and helplessness from afar, observing another humanitarian crisis unfold before us via our laptop screens, phones and on social media.

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment sign up to our free weekly Voices Dispatches newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

It can feel frustrating at times like this, not knowing how we can help or make a positive difference, and wanting to avoid centring ourselves in the narrative of war when we are the lucky ones, the unaffected. We must never lose sight of whose plight this is: that of the Ukrainian people.

One thing we can do, as a newspaper, is campaign - we can put pressure on the British government to listen to the people who are desperate for help; to listen to our calls to help them, exactly as we'd hope for in return. On the Voices desk, we can amplify the stories of those affected, and give a platform to MPs who will take the argument to the heart of Westminster and lay out our demands.

I feel immensely proud to work for an outlet like The Independent, but it is pride mixed with deep regret. It's regretful that we have to campaign in the first place; that it takes the pressure of news organisations and UK citizens for our government to do the right thing. We hope our government will follow the example set by Ireland and Portugal, and waive its own rules to accept refugees without visas. Let's hope those in power listen.

Yours,

Victoria Richards

Voices editor

**Load-Date:** February 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: Why giving cash is better than alternatives to help Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y2-0S91-DY4H-K3KT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 12:29 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:5

**Length:** 830 words

**Byline:** Judith Escribano

**Highlight:** Refugees Welcome: Giving people dignity through cash transfers is the best way to help those caught in the crisis in Ukraine and bordering countries

**Body**

The Ukrainian conflict and accompanying humanitarian crisis have prompted a massive outpouring of support all around the world. Some are offering up their homes to host refugees, while others are organising collections of goods to send to people in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) or neighbouring countries.

These are very generous solutions, but I'd like to explain why donating cash to charities is better; and why some charities will then pass on those cash donations as cash, rather than buying goods.

We understand why people like to donate goods in an emergency, but we can't send food, clothes, blankets or medical equipment from the UK even if they're in perfect condition. Customs regulations and transport costs make the process of exporting items very complicated, time-consuming and expensive. The expense is usually more than the goods are worth. We also don't have the capacity to sort the goods here or to distribute them once there. It's usually much easier to buy items in the countries where they are needed. It's also usually cheaper and helps local markets and economies, helping countries to get back on their feet.

Think of the carbon footprint of driving goods 1,500 miles, when they could just as easily be bought in a shop in Poland, Moldova or Romania.

So, this explains why donating cash is better than donating goods. But what will we do with your donations once we have them? Well, sometimes, we won't even buy goods in-country or in neighbouring countries. Sometimes we will just give cash to people in need of help.

Imagine fleeing your home under heavy bombardment. If you're lucky, there will be a break in shelling, and you'll have a car. You will pack it up with as much as you can and you will cross the border into a safe, neighbouring country. If you're not so lucky, you'll have travelled by foot, carrying with you as much as you can in a small case. Either way, you won't have much with you. You'll be leaving so much behind. When you reach the safety of a neighbouring country, you'll be exhausted and in despair. You'll be desperate to maintain contact with your friends and family back home or in other neighbouring countries. But you'll no longer be earning money. You may not be able to access your savings from the bank. You may not have any savings. You'll need food and drink and warmth; you may need credit for your phone so you can keep in touch with your loved ones. So, it is highly likely that you will need and want cash.

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment sign up to our free weekly Voices newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

Charities can hand over cash to people in need of help so they can make choices on how best to spend the money. It's a dignified way of giving people support. It lets people know we trust them. It gives people freedom and power when they have none. And it helps local economies.

In most situations, there is strong evidence that money - not goods - is the most efficient and effective way to distribute emergency aid. Giving cash transfers is not wasteful, does not create dependency and is empowering and effective.

There are some concerns that cash could be diverted, but there are ways to prevent waste, in particular by paying directly to beneficiaries and being very clear about who is getting what.

Quality control is vital too. Some people have donated infant formula and, while that is well-intentioned, that can be dangerous. People on the move often do not have a clean reliable place to mix the formula or clean the feeding equipment. They might not be able to mix it with clean water. They might also not be able to dilute the artificial milk in the right way if the label is not in their language. When infant formula is donated during emergencies, we tend to see a direct correlation between these donations and babies falling sick - or even dying.

So please, give cash not goods. And please also welcome it when charities say they are setting up cash transfer programmes.

Donations can be made at [*www.dec.org.uk*](http://www.dec.org.uk) or by calling 0370 60 60 900. Judith Escribano is Assistant Director of Communications for Action Against Hunger.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome) campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*The Homes for Ukraine scheme is bold and right but must be better run*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BT1-DFJ1-F072-400F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

April 14, 2024 Sunday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 2

**Length:** 591 words

**Byline:** EDITORIAL

**Body**

One of the good decisions made by Michael Gove, who as housing and communities secretary was responsible for the Homes for Ukraine scheme when it was set up two years ago, was to allow the project to be driven from the bottom up. The scheme was an expression of solidarity from the British people to the Ukrainian people, and the role of the British government, as Mr Gove saw it, was to enable and support it - but mainly to get out of the way.

It was, and remains, an overwhelming success. More than 180,000 visas have been issued to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** through the sponsorship route. The problems with the scheme, exclusively reported by The Independent, in no way undermine the policy in principle - on the contrary, they argue for improved safeguards in order to ensure continuing high levels of public support for it.

Our report nevertheless reveals some alarming cases. Some people with suspected links to serious or organised crime were among those approved as hosts under the scheme, while some refugees have been forced to work for their hosts. Figures obtained by The Independent through a freedom of information request reveal that around a quarter of eligible councils - 37 out of roughly 150 - said they had been alerted to a serious safeguarding concern (which can include child protection concerns) about a host.

Researchers from University College London also found that visas for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** had often been issued before checks on accommodation, and with the Disclosure and Barring Service, were completed. If these checks were then failed, a new host had to be found at short notice.

A government spokesperson told The Independent: "All sponsors and all adults living in a sponsor's household are subject to stringent checks before they are allowed to host a Ukrainian refugee, and we would urge local councils to contact the police if they suspect any exploitation."

Sometimes it would seem, however, that the checks are not stringent, or timely, enough. As for increasing the safeguarding burden on local councils, this would seem to be a classic example of central government adding to the responsibilities of local government while further reducing the resources available. As more and more councils warn of the risk of bankruptcy, the problem of funding is now acute.

It is essential that the government gets this right because the war in Ukraine seems likely to continue for some time to come. A year ago, after the scheme had been operating for a year, Mr Gove said: "I want to say thank you to everyone who has acted as a host and been such a wonderful, wonderful example of British generosity in showing what we can do to support people in their most difficult hour."

That difficult hour now extends into its third year. The British people overwhelmingly support the Ukrainian people in their defence of freedom against Vladimir Putin's aggression. That support must be sustained. It takes the hard form of money and equipment for Ukrainian forces, and the soft form of a warm welcome for refugees. We are proud of both, and should not allow problems with the Homes for Ukraine scheme to undermine either part.

Meanwhile, we support Lord Cameron, the foreign secretary, in his efforts to hold the US Congress to its fine words of support for democracy and self-determination, of resistance to tyranny and financial support for Ukraine. All democracies of the world should stiffen their resolve to stand up to Putin and to stand with our friends in Ukraine. Solidarity starts at home but it extends across the whole of Europe.

**Load-Date:** April 14, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Public anger at the UK's stance on Ukrainian refugees is becoming a clamour*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X1-V7D1-JBNF-W30T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 2, 2022 Wednesday 10:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** EDITORIALS,VOICES; Version:1

**Length:** 759 words

**Byline:** Editorial

**Highlight:** Editorial: If taking control of our borders means anything it should mean the right to offer a shelter to those in need

**Body**

The standing ovation given by the House of Commons to the [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) ambassador, Vadym Prystaiko, was a historic moment, a moving one, and an important one. For a nation in mortal danger, every gesture of solidarity may provide some comfort. Yet as the questions to the prime minister that followed illustrate, much more can, and should, be done to support the people of Ukraine [*as they struggle against*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/putin-ukraine-nato-invasion-zelensky-b2026726.html) a barbaric invader.

The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/ukraine-war-russia-refugees-welcome-b2025033.html) campaign shows that the British public is big-hearted and generous towards defenceless people in obvious need. The public would surely support the government following the lead of the European Union and immediately introducing a special fast-track three-year visa for Ukrainians fleeing war - and it is, in any case, a moral imperative and a legal one under the UN convention on refugees.

The Independent has set up a petition calling on the UK government to be at the forefront of the international community offering aid and support to those in Ukraine. To sign the petition click [*here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees)

So it should be implemented forthwith. Boris Johnson tries to argue that the UK cannot do that because the EU operates the Schengen open borders system, but it isn't obvious what relevance that has for post-Brexit Britain. Home secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) warns about hostile agents, but makes it sound like an excuse. If taking control of our borders means anything, it should mean the right to offer shelter to those in need. A way can be found safely and quickly.

Targeted Russian attacks on civilian buildings have apparently already begun, and before long Ukraine's major cities will find themselves encircled, [*awaiting a siege or being wiped*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/putin-ukraine-nato-invasion-zelensky-b2026726.html) from the face of the earth, as was Grozny before them. A humanitarian disaster is looming, and the public demand for something to be done will become a clamour. Something will certainly have to be done.

The Ukrainian government has requested the Pope intervenes with Vladimir Putin to establish safe ground corridors for the wounded, refugees and humanitarian supplies such as medicine and clean water. The British government should support the initiative, and continue to provide such aid as well as military assistance, and to make arrangements for charities and agencies to deliver what the British public are generously sending to the region, both in Ukraine and in neighbouring nations.

The Independent is also raising money for the people of Ukraine - if you would like to donate then please [*click here*](http://independent.co.uk/ukrainedonations) for our GoFundMe page

So-called no-fly zones are also an obvious way to help save lives in such a situation as this, but they risk provoking a wider war, as might any aerial airlift of humanitarian aid to Kyiv and Kharkiv or naval supplies to Odesa. If Russian forces challenge Nato forces or western civilian vessels or aircraft, then escalation could easily follow. President Putin's threats to use nuclear weaponry have to be taken seriously. Yet they might be a bluff, and for now the better way is to supply Ukraine with anti-aircraft systems. But pressure for no-fly zones will intensify as the strangling of Kyiv proceeds to its grisly conclusion.

As the opposition parties and Conservative backbenchers argue, and the government partially concedes, much more could also be done to tighten economic sanctions and those on certain named individuals, cronies of Putin, with substantial interests in London. The opposition has offered to work with the government to close the loopholes and stop the laundering of dirty money in a matter of days through the economic crimes bill. There are other measures that might help law firms bullying journalists and MPs who are trying to highlight the more egregious abuses of British hospitality. Chris Bryant (Labour,) and Bob Seely (Conservative) [*are rightly speaking out*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/russian-lawyers-oligarchs-tory-seely-ukraine-b2026651.html) under parliamentary privilege to expose what has been going on, and they deserve to be listened to, and their warnings acted on.

With the right assistance, many civilian lives can be saved in the coming days. Bolder moves, and riskier ones, will be needed if the west is serious about helping the Ukrainians win this unequal war and turn back the invaders. Unprecedented economic war will be required, with the broadest possible coalition of nations. Yet the fact remains that only the Russian people can stop President Putin from menacing his neighbours and threatening the peace of the world.

**Load-Date:** March 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*How 'Fortress Europe' is welcoming Ukrainian refugees while getting tougher on migration*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y9-91J1-DY4H-K0B4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 8:16 PM GMT

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**Section:** WORLD,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:1

**Length:** 1935 words

**Byline:** Moira Lavelle and Kieran Guilbert

**Highlight:** Many of the EU nations supporting Ukrainians fleeing war have grown increasingly hostile to other refugees and migrants, with violence and pushbacks now widespread, Moira Lavelle and Kieran Guilbert report

**Body**

Having fled persecution and violence in Iran's Kurdish region in 2018, Daryan headed to [*Turkey*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/turkey) and spent six months trying to cross the border into [*Greece*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/greece) -hoping to apply for asylum there and start a new life in Europe.

Daryan -who was 20 at the time -said he was driven back from the border about a dozen times, but is unsure of the exact number because he was pushed back so frequently.

He described a system: men dressed in military fatigues or clad in black and wearing masks who would capture people like him trying to cross the border, detain them for several days, then take them back to the border, beat them, and push them back to Turkey in large groups.

Daryan said his phone was taken every time he was pushed back -meaning he has no video evidence to back up his story -and that his money and even shoelaces were stolen on some occasions.

Today, the 24-year-old lives in Athens, having finally secured asylum last year after three years in limbo and having lost track of how many times he had tried to cross the border only to be beaten and driven back.

But he is deeply resentful of the European Union ([*EU*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/eu) ) for the violence he suffered as well as the repeated violation of his human rights.

"Look I wasn't like this," said Daryan, whose name has been changed to protect his identity.

"Sometimes I hate them because of these sufferings. Why, what did I do? Am I a bad person? No," he told The Independent in an interview. "I came here to fix my life."

Daryan faced the blunt edge of Europe's borders, and he is one a growing number of migrants and [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) in recent years to have suffered violence, discrimination and unlawful treatment.

For years, the EU has built walls, increased surveillance, bolstered policing along its borders, cut down on access to asylum, and illegally pushed back thousands of people who have undergone arduous and often dangerous journeys by land or sea to seek refuge.

The UN refugee agency (UNHCR) said last month -just days before [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) invaded [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) -that it was "deeply concerned" by rising violence and serious human rights violations, particularly pushbacks, at borders in various European countries including Croatia, Greece and Hungary.

Several such incidents had resulted in the deaths of refugees and migrants, its chief Filippo Grandi said in an unusually strong statement, calling the trend "legally and morally unacceptable".

"We fear these deplorable practices now risk becoming normalised, and policy based," Mr Grandi said. "They reinforce a harmful and unnecessary 'Fortress Europe' narrative."

As the war in Ukraine pushes a new wave of refugees into the EU -the number surpassed 2 million on Tuesday and that figure is expected to double -the bloc is having to once again confront questions about what it means to welcome refugees, and who qualifies as one.

The conversation about migrants and refugees rose to the fore in Europe in 2015, when more than 1.3 million people -mostly Syrians -requested asylum on the continent -at that point representing the most applications in a single year since the Second World War.

"Since 2015 when the 'European refugee crisis' was declared, there has been an acceleration in the use of measures to deny access at borders to EU and to otherwise prevent people from arriving in Europe to seek protection, regardless of the costs and consequences, and despite the record numbers of displaced people globally," said Villads Zahle, a spokesperson for the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE).

Access to asylum in the EU has been cut and slowed through several legal mechanisms.

According to the bloc's 2013 Dublin III regulation, migrants must apply for asylum in the first EU country they set foot in, which has caused severe backlogs in Spain, Greece and Italy and left countless people in limbo for years.

The misplaced focus on security, at the expense of human rights, risks emboldening governments to enact strict border policies

Emily Venturi, Chatham House

What's more, in 2016, the EU brokered a deal with Turkey, declaring it a "safe third country".

This means migrants who cross from there into Greek islands must first prove they were or would be unsafe on Turkish soil before being permitted to apply for asylum -regardless of whatever hardship or persecution they may have faced in their countries of origin.

Then in 2017, Italy signed an EU-sponsored agreement with Libya on [*migration*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/migration) , agreeing to provide millions of euros worth of financial and technical support to the Libyan Coastguard to intercept boats trying to reach Europe, and return them.

The deal has been widely criticised, especially over the returns, as many refugees are then kept in Libyan detention centres where the UN says the violence inflicted on people may amount to crimes against humanity.

Emily Venturi, an academy associate at Chatham House, said such agreements reflected how transactional and short-term border control had become "Europe's modus operandi".

"The misplaced focus on security, at the expense of human rights, risks emboldening governments to enact strict border policies and violate the right to seek asylum, irrespective of the means used by a person to reach safety," she told The Independent.

Furthermore, for years, EU countries have denied search-and-rescue ships operating in the Mediterranean to dock, and allow people to disembark and apply for asylum. These NGO-run ships have also been repeatedly stripped of their flags, rendering them unable to sail or conduct rescue missions at all.

Deterrence methods at EU borders have also become physical, in a literal sense: walls and fences have been erected recently on the border in Poland, in Lithuania on the border with Belarus, in Greece on the border with Turkey, and in Spain's Ceuta and Melilla enclaves.

Beyond the legal measures, the EU has increasingly used pushbacks, which Daryan suffered repeatedly, to prevent and deter migrants from reaching Europe.

Pushbacks are a direct violation of the 1951 Refugee Convention, which states that "refugees should not be penalised for their illegal entry or stay. This recognises that the seeking of asylum can require refugees to breach immigration rules."

While reports of pushbacks have been prevalent for years, there has been an increase since 2020, particularly in Croatia and Greece, according to campaigners.

There have been reports of pushbacks for years, but an increase in the past two years, particularly in Croatia and Greece:

"Since March 2020, pushbacks have become the norm in the Aegean region," said Lorraine Leete, a coordinator of the Lesvos Legal Center on the Greek island, also known as Lesbos.

On Greece's sea border there have been multiple verified reports of people landing on its shores, being gathered by masked men working for the Greek coastguard, put on small dinghies, and abandoned at sea.

A Lighthouse Reports Investigation used video evidence and documents from the EU's tender database to verify that Croatian police are hunting people trying to cross the border, beating them and pushing them back, with the support of EU funds.

Greece denies pushbacks occur, and has dismissed such reports as Turkish propaganda. Croatia stated last October it would investigate the allegations of pushbacks.

The European Commission has stated it "strongly opposes any pushback practices, and has repeatedly emphasised that any such practices are illegal".

While the UNHCR's statement last month was the first time it has acknowledged and denounced pushbacks, some campaigners and analysts do not believe it will have an impact.

Hope Barker, a policy analyst at the Border Violence Monitoring Network, said it had testimonies indicating that UNHCR was not only aware of "systematic and widespread" pushbacks in Greece, but failing to address the issue and even implicit in some cases.

"There's one (testimony) in which people describe being registered with UNHCR staff in Vial camp (on Chios island) before being pushed back," she said.

The EU's stance on refugees and asylum has come under fresh scrutiny once more following Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February, which has seen people fleeing to seek safety in members of the bloc including Poland, Slovakia, Romania and Hungary.

Ukrainians may enter the EU for 90 days without a visa, and the bloc has stated that due to the war, it will apply a "temporary mass protection" law to extend this residency, and avoid complicated asylum procedures. This is the first time the EU will apply the protection directive, which was established in the 1990s after the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia.

There have been several reports of African students and other people of colour fleeing Ukraine being denied transportation, border crossings, and in some cases facing violence from authorities.

European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen stated that the welcome for Ukrainians should also apply to third-country nationals fleeing the conflict: "Those people must be helped. Moreover, those in need of protection in the EU can also apply for asylum."

While Poland has won widespread praise for how it has welcomed ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, there were very contrasting scenes along a different part of its border just four months ago.

In November, thousands of people from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan were pushed back by Polish border guards as they tried to cross from Belarus. At least 19 people -infants among them -are reported to have died in the Polish-Belarusian border region amid the standoff between the two nations.

The Polish government has said the country's actions were legitimate to protect its borders, accusing Minsk of encouraging migrants to travel to Belarus and cross the border illegally.

Many observers and analysts have been quick to highlight the difference in how Ukrainians have been treated compared to the millions of people from Syria, Afghanistan, and other non-European nations who have been arriving on the EU's shores in recent years.

For example, in Hungary, Prime Minister Viktor Orban last week said during a visit to the country's border with Ukraine that "migrants are stopped" while "refugees can get all the help".

Furthermore, in Greece, Minister of Migration and Asylum Notis Mitarakis recently said arrivals from Ukraine are "real refugees".

"That is what international law says, not the ideologies of the Left," he said.

Over the last week, six people -believed to be migrants -were found drowned near Lesbos, while separately, the coast guard said it had stopped five boats carrying more than 120 people from entering Greek waters. Meanwhile, Greece has so far welcomed about 5,000 Ukrainians and offered them automatic temporary protection that applies for at least a year.

This disparity is difficult to accept for people like Daryan.

"I feel horrible," he said. "What difference do we have (between us)? I don't know why they do this. They don't have any humanity."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*She was the girl in a red coat in 'Schindler's List'. Now, she's helping Ukrainian refugees in Poland*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:659R-CH21-JBNF-W565-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 26, 2022 Tuesday 5:43 PM GMT

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**Section:** AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1151 words

**Byline:** Clémence Michallon

**Highlight:** Oliwia Dabrowska was three when she was cast in Steven Spielberg's movie, almost by accident. She tells Clémence Michallon how she and a group of volunteers have worked to support refugees following Russia's invasion of Ukraine

**Body**

Oliwia Dabrowska is a normal person who never meant to become famous. She's 32 years old and lives in her native Poland with her husband and their rescue dog. She used to be a librarian but switched to working as a freelance copywriter for better pay. She loves books and occasionally volunteers for a dog rescue organization.

"It's hard to say something about myself," she tells The Independent. "I can tell you facts, but facts don't describe me. I cannot judge myself. I hope I'm a good person. That's all I can say."

Yet to millions of people, one image of Dabrowska is overwhelmingly familiar. When she was three years old, she was cast in Schindler's List. She portrayed the girl in the red coat, one of few elements of color in the mainly black and white film. To director Steven Spielberg, the girl in the red coat symbolized the inaction of governments during the Holocaust: "Nothing was being done to slow down the industrialized progress the Nazis were making in the total annihilation of European Jewry," the director [*once told journalist Richard Schickel*](https://www.dga.org/craft/dgaq/all-articles/0604-winter2006-07/dga-interview-steven-spielberg.aspx). "... So that was my message in letting that scene be in color. It was as obvious as a little girl wearing a red coat walking down the street."

The way she recounts it, Dabrowska's casting in Schindler's List was almost an accident. When the film entered production in Krakow, she says, the production team needed a lot of extras. She jokes that half of the population in the 700,000-people city must have become involved in the movie. Her mother, her grandparents, her aunt, and several of her mother's friends were all extras. At some point, Dabrowska's mother received information for the casting of the girl in the red coat. Dabrowska attended the audition with her grandfather, because no one else was available to take her.

"I've never asked [Spielberg] why he chose me, but I think it was because I wasn't shy, I wasn't afraid," she says. "And I wasn't interested, actually. I wasn't trying to show Steven Spielberg my best face. There were other girls who were there with their mothers. It was like a pageant, a competition." She laughs at the memory: "My grandfather wasn't interested either. He just took care of me. So I could do whatever I wanted." In the end, she believes her natural behavior was the reason she was picked.

Dabrowska doesn't remember much from filming. "My actual memories are more feelings than fact," she says. A lot of the anecdotes she knows were recounted to her by her mother. She did impact one scene specifically, she tells me: at one point during filming, the girl in the red coat had to go under a bed. Dabrowska was afraid of the dark (and possible spiders) and didn't want to go in with her head first, but rather her legs first. "Steven Spielberg accepted this change, and that's in the movie," she says with a smile. "So I had a little bit of influence."

After the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February, Dabrowska was reminded of the character she played - and it pushed her to do something. To her, the girl in the red coat was a symbol of trauma, embodying the atrocities of the Holocaust and of the Second World War. On 9 March, she shared an artwork of the same girl, this time in a blue coat, against a yellow background - matching the colors of the Ukraine flag. Inspired by conversations with two of her friends, Dabrowska has reimagined the girl in the blue coat as representing healing in the aftermath of trauma. "She was always the symbol of hope," she wrote on Instagram. "Let her be it again." The post came as Dabrowska got involved with on-the-ground volunteers to assist ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, helping them find housing and transportation. The [*group*](https://www.instagram.com/gsr_ua/) started out small but now has more than 200 members. Dabrowska now devotes most of her time to volunteer work.

In one instance, Dabrowska helped organize an effort to deliver insulin to diabetic people. At a different time, a 19-year-old girl texted her that she'd be arriving by train and was looking for a place to stay. "It's not very safe for girls who are alone," Dabrowska says. "There are a lot of bad people in the world." She texted the young woman back promptly and helped her find somewhere to go. Once, Dabrowska was home after a long day when she got a call around 10pm. A mother was traveling alone with her child; she was scheduled to take a bus to Berlin, Germany, the next day but needed somewhere to spend the night. Dabrowska called a friend and helped ensure the mother stayed in a safe place.

Dabrowska and the rest of her group have a wide remit in terms of what they will do and who they will help. They have coordinated transportation for people crossing the border from Ukraine into Poland. They have helped refugees find housing and a way to travel there. They have coordinated with other volunteers to help meet everyone's needs. And it hasn't gone unnoticed.

Dabrowska's volunteer work, paired with the imagery of the girl in the blue dress, have made headlines around the world. When we speak, she tells me she has been doing interviews for two weeks, sometimes five or six per day.

This has been her first foray back in the public eye since her acting career. After Schindler's List, Dabrowska did commercials and had a few more screen credits. Ultimately, though, she stopped acting because she didn't want to spend her childhood attending casting calls. "Maybe I wasn't that talented," she says. "It was a different time. There was no internet, no computer in my home. So there were fewer possibilities to find opportunities." She went back to normal life.

View this post on Instagram [*A post shared by Oliwia Dbrowska (@oliwia.dabrowska\_)*](https://www.instagram.com/p/Ca5RQ0lIa0-/?utm_source=ig_embed&utm_campaign=loading)

Dabrowska speaks of her work with refugees with respect, empathy, and compassion. The best way people can help, from the US and other countries, is through financial donations, she says. She has started an [*online fundraiser*](https://zrzutka.pl/en/evetp6) , aiming to raise 43,000 ($46,000 or £36,000). If people want to donate goods, they can send first-aid supplies (she mentions bandages and tourniquets specifically), as well as clothes for Ukrainian soldiers, shoes, socks, brand-new underwear, and food with a long shelf life, such as canned goods. But money, she says, is the most important resource, because volunteers can allocate it to the most pressing needs. "People don't want to talk about money. They don't like it," she adds. "But I must be honest: it's important. We need that help."

Working with refugees, she has felt the weight of the trauma their generation will experience. "I will never understand them, but I can do whatever I can to help them," she says. "But it's also a very sad feeling, because even if I'm doing as much as I can, it won't ever be enough. The needs are bigger than our volunteer group's capacities. ... This is very difficult, but we don't stop. We won't stop."

**Load-Date:** April 26, 2022

**End of Document**



# [*The Homes for Ukraine scheme is bold and right but must be better run*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BSV-DJM1-JBNF-W29M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 13, 2024 Saturday 5:18 PM GMT

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**Section:** THE INDEPENDENT VIEW,VOICES; Version:1

**Length:** 593 words

**Byline:** Editorial

**Highlight:** THE INDEPENDENT VIEW: Editorial: Reports of refugees sent to live with suspected gangsters underline the need for improved safeguards

**Body**

One of the good decisions made by Michael Gove, who as housing and communities secretary was responsible for the Homes for Ukraine scheme when it was set up two years ago, was to allow the project to be driven from the bottom up.

The scheme was an [*expression of solidarity*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-latest-news-putin-b2528144.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine-Russia%20war%20latest:%20Kyiv%20unleashes%20drones%20on%20Russian%20city%20as%20Putin%20mocks%20peace%20conference) from the British people to the Ukrainian people, and the role of the British government, as Mr Gove saw it, was to enable and support it – but mainly to get out of the way.

It was, and remains, an overwhelming success. More than 180,000 visas have been issued to [***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-bishop-uk-us-russia-cameron-b2526534.html%22%20title=%22‘A%20battle%20for%20democracy’:%20Ukraine%20bishop%20urges%20UK%20and%20US%20to%20keep%20supporting%20fight%20against%20Russia) through the sponsorship route. The problems with the scheme, [*exclusively reported by The Independent*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukrainian-refugees-uk-homes-ukraine-crime-b2523166.html) , in no way undermine the policy in principle – on the contrary, they argue for improved safeguards in order to ensure continuing high levels of public support for it.

Our report nevertheless reveals some alarming cases. Some people with suspected links to serious or organised crime were among those approved as hosts under the scheme, while some refugees have been forced to work for their hosts.

Figures obtained by The Independent through a freedom of information request reveal that around a quarter of eligible councils – 37 out of roughly 150 – said they had been alerted to a serious safeguarding concern (which can include child protection concerns) about a host.

Researchers from University College London also found that [*visas for* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-kremlin-zaporizhzhia-telegram-kyiv-b2528214.html%22%20title=%22A%20local%20official%20says%20at%20least%2010%20people%20have%20died%20in%20shelling%20in%20Russian-occupied%20Ukraine) had often been issued before checks on accommodation, and with the Disclosure and Barring Service, were completed. If these checks were then failed, a new host had to be found at short notice.

A government spokesperson told The Independent: “All sponsors and all adults living in a sponsor’s household are subject to stringent checks before they are allowed to [*host a Ukrainian refugee*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-russia-kyiv-dmitry-peskov-b2527800.html%22%20title=%22Kremlin%20says%202022%20draft%20document%20could%20serve%20as%20starting%20point%20for%20future%20Ukraine%20peace%20talks) , and we would urge local councils to contact the police if they suspect any exploitation.”

Sometimes it would seem, however, that the checks are not stringent, or timely, enough. As for increasing the safeguarding burden on local councils, this would seem to be a classic example of central government adding to the responsibilities of local government while further reducing the resources available. As more and more councils warn of the risk of bankruptcy, the problem of funding is now acute.

It is essential that the government gets this right because [*the war in Ukraine seems likely to continue*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/uk-troops-ukraine-minister-james-heappey-b2527767.html%22%20title=%22UK%20should%20consider%20sending%20troops%20to%20Ukraine,%20ex-defence%20minister%20says) for some time to come. A year ago, after the scheme had been operating for a year, Mr Gove said: “I want to say thank you to everyone who has acted as a host and been such a wonderful, wonderful example of British generosity in showing what we can do to support people in their most difficult hour.”

That difficult hour now [*extends into its third year*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/hm-treasury-london-metal-exchange-jeremy-hunt-annemarie-trevelyan-government-b2528048.html%22%20title=%22UK%20and%20US%20block%20trade%20of%20new%20Russian%20metals%20at%20world’s%20largest%20exchanges). The British people overwhelmingly support the Ukrainian people in their defence of freedom against Vladimir Putin’s aggression. That support must be sustained. It takes the hard form of money and equipment for Ukrainian forces, and the soft form of a warm welcome for refugees. We are proud of both, and should not allow problems with the Homes for Ukraine scheme to undermine either part.

Meanwhile, we support [*Lord Cameron, the foreign secretary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/rishi-sunak-david-cameron-deputy-foreign-secretary-b2527911.html%22%20title=%22Rishi%20Sunak%20creates%20new%20post%20to%20give%20David%20Cameron%20a%20deputy%20after%20another%20minister%20quits) , in his efforts to hold the US Congress to its fine words of support for democracy and self-determination, of resistance to tyranny and financial support for Ukraine. All democracies of the world should stiffen their resolve to stand up to Putin and to stand with our friends in Ukraine. Solidarity starts at home, but it extends across the whole of Europe.

**Load-Date:** April 13, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Archbishop of Canterbury praises Ukrainian people in Kyiv visit*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6707-NW11-DY4H-K12Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

November 30, 2022 Wednesday 9:29 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 441 words

**Byline:** Sam Hall

**Highlight:** Justin Welby will meet church leaders during his trip.

**Body**

The [*Archbishop*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/archbishop) of [*Canterbury*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/canterbury) [*Justin Welby*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/justin-welby) arrived in [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) on Wednesday for a three-day visit to the Ukrainian capital as he praised the “extraordinary courage” of the country’s people.

The Archbishop said the Advent visit was about “showing solidarity” with the people and churches of Ukraine “as they face a profoundly difficult winter”.

During the trip, the Archbishop will meet with Ukrainian church leaders to hear their accounts of what the country is going through and understand how the Church of England can support them.

The Archbishop will also meet ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and internally-displaced people, and observe the work of churches and charities providing support to them.

The people of Ukraine have shown extraordinary courage in the face of Russia’s illegal, unjust and brutal invasion

Archbishop of Canterbury

On his way to Kyiv, the Archbishop met with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in [*Warsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warsaw) – an experience he said was “deeply moving” as he spent Tuesday afternoon in the Polish capital.

He also visited Ukrainian House, a support centre in Warsaw for migrants that has been turned into a crisis centre supporting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** since the start of the Russian invasion.

Arriving in Kyiv on Wednesday, the Archbishop said: “The people of Ukraine have shown extraordinary courage in the face of Russia’s illegal, unjust and brutal invasion. This visit is about showing solidarity with them as they face a profoundly difficult winter.

“It was deeply moving to meet with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Warsaw yesterday and hear their stories. In this season of Advent, we remember that Jesus was born into conflict and persecution – and became a refugee when his parents fled violence and persecution to seek safety in Egypt.

“I urge Christians in the Church of England and around the world to keep praying for the people of Ukraine in this Advent season – along with all people caught up in conflicts around the world – and offering our solidarity and support in every way we can.”

The Anglican Bishop in Europe, the Rt Revd Dr Robert Innes, is travelling with the Archbishop throughout the visit to Poland and Ukraine, which both have a small community of Anglicans.

While in the Ukrainian capital, the Archbishop and Bishop Robert will meet with members of Christ Church Kyiv, the Church of England church in Kyiv.

Bishop Robert said: “I am very grateful to have this opportunity to travel to Ukraine to show my personal support for our brothers and sisters in Christ here at this difficult and painful time.

“Archbishop Justin and I are here to show solidarity with all the churches in Ukraine as we continue to pray for a peaceful and just end to the war.”

**Load-Date:** November 30, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Why is Michael Gove's homes for Ukraine scheme so slow?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6535-3R41-JBNF-W164-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 26, 2022 Saturday 10:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** POLITICS EXPLAINED,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:1

**Length:** 699 words

**Byline:** Adam Forrest

**Highlight:** POLITICS EXPLAINED: Only a trickle of Ukrainians have been matched up with Britons' spare rooms. Adam Forrest takes a closer look at the sluggish start to the sponsorship route

**Body**

Difficulties, delays and lack of detail. These are familiar complaints about the government's handling of the [***Ukraine***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ***refugee crisis***. Like the family visa scheme before it, the sponsorship route isn't working out as planned.

[*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) is the cabinet minister overseeing the Homes for Ukraine scheme, which matches up British sponsors with those fleeing the Russian invasion. The levelling up secretary claimed on 13 March that we would see the first arrivals in "one week's time".

On 16 March the refugee minister Lord Harrington said we would see "thousands" of Ukrainians welcomed into the UK under the scheme in the week ahead. That week has been and gone. And only a trickle of [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) has been able to take up the offer of their British sponsors.

The first handful of successful matches emerged this weekend - including one between [*environment minister Victoria Prentis and 25-year-old Vika*](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/03/25/first-mp-take-ukrainian-refugee-says-wants-give-skills-rebuild/%22%20title=%22First%20MP%20to%20take%20in%20Ukrainian%20refugee%20says%20she%20wants%20to%20give%20her%20'the%20skills%20to%20rebuild%20Kyiv') , who will stay at the Conservative MP's constituency home.

Organisers at the Sanctuary Foundation, a charity helping coordinate efforts to match hosts and refugees, said they knew of seven Ukrainians who had arrived under the route. Around 150,000 Britons with spare rooms have registered to help. But the majority have not been able to take the next step in the "matching" process.

The government has been criticised for relying on individuals' use of social media - a scenario described as "dating for refugees". Some of those who have been able to connect with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** online are growing frustrated over problems with the complex visa forms required.

Volunteer lawyers and charity workers, some of whom have gone to Poland and other neighbouring countries to help refugees with the process, have pointed to a series of problems. Refugees need to upload copies of documents in PDF format, for example, which means families fleeing with little more than shopping bags need access to a PDF converter.

One lawyer told The Independent the sponsorship scheme form had not even been translated into Ukrainian until Thursday, creating further delays. And even those who have matched up, and provided all the necessary documentation, are still waiting to hear whether the visa application is successful.

Devon couple Chris Tattersall, 63, and Anne, 62, said they have been communicating with a family stuck in Poland for two weeks. But no progress has been made. "Everything is taking so long ... every hour somebody is sat there with a child and with a bag is like a week, a day is like a year and almost a month is like a lifetime," said Mr Tattersall.

To complicate matters, sponsors need to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check from their local council before they can welcome a refugee, which can take up to 14 days.

Refugee campaigners have said it could be weeks before substantial numbers of people are granted safety in the UK under the scheme.

They are calling on the government to accredit leading charities to help match people to ease concerns about amateur Facebook pages, which could leave the process open to unnecessary setbacks and abuse.

But charities argue it would be far easier if the government dropped visa requirements and set up a humanitarian scheme allowing large numbers to come to the UK quickly. This would place responsibility on central government and local authorities to come up with temporary housing solutions.

Meanwhile, some Ukrainians are awaiting "phase two" of the sponsorship scheme, which will be opened up to community groups, charities and churches in the hope such organisations can better take on the cumbersome visa bureaucracy.

Grilled on the sluggish pace of the sponsorship scheme, Home Office minister Kit Malthouse admitted this weekend that "we can be quicker". He offered yet another promise when he said, "I guarantee those numbers will accelerate in a week's time."

Mr Gove's levelling up department said it will provide the first number on how many people have arrived through Homes for Ukraine next week. It looks almost certain to be very few.

Rather than offering more promises, Mr Gove may wish to take a step back and consider whether a visa system designed to control immigration in peacetime is appropriate for a time of war.

**Load-Date:** March 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Man whose family fled Nazis now ‘giving something back’ by helping Ukrainians*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67MB-1T31-DY4H-K0FX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 23, 2023 Thursday 12:46 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 325 words

**Byline:** Christopher McKeon

**Highlight:** Jim Cator’s mother, grandmother and aunt came to the UK in 1939 to escape persecution in Germany.

**Body**

A man whose family fled the [*Nazis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nazis) in 1939 has said he is “giving something back” by taking in ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Jim Cator is one of several sponsors working with World Jewish Relief to provide homes for Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion and is currently waiting for a second family to arrive from Odesa after hosting a mother and two children for five months.

His own family history has played a role in motivating him to provide accommodation for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

The trauma of displaced people is something I feel quite deeply about from my family contacts

Jim Cator

His grandmother was born in Ukraine, but pogroms – an organised massacre of an ethnic group, and in particular [*Jews*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jews) in the early 20th century – forced her to flee to [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) , when Mr Cator’s mother was born.

But in 1939, Nazi persecution forced her to flee again along with Mr Cator’s mother and aunt, with the family ending up in [*England*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/england) with the help of a Jewish refugee charity.

Discussing his motivation for helping ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** now, he said his “family links” had played a big role.

He said: “These people could be my family, three or four generations down the line.

“The trauma of displaced people is something I feel quite deeply about from my family contacts.”

World Jewish Relief, which has matched Mr Cator’s family with refugees seeking accommodation in the UK, provides another family link.

Then called the Central British Fund for German Jewry (CBF), the charity provided support for Mr Cator’s family when they arrived in the UK in 1939, giving them clothing, money and train tickets.

Now living in the Black Country, Mr Cator said he and his wife had “enjoyed” hosting a Ukrainian family for five months, adding it meant they had been able to “give something back” after the help his ancestors had received.

He said: “We could see all the things on the television and for the first time we have actually been able to respond directly, not just by giving money.”

**Load-Date:** February 23, 2023

**End of Document**



[*'After the victory, we will go home': Ukrainian refugees show faith in face of horror*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YD-JPY1-JCS0-D136-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 9, 2022 Wednesday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 10

**Length:** 1628 words

**Byline:** DAVID COHEN

**Body**

They crossed the Ukrainian border into Poland on foot.

Mothers carried their youngest children in their arms. Older siblings trudged alongside with dogged determination. It was sub-zero and they were freezing, hungry and utterly exhausted.

Among them was Inna, 56, her daughter Olena, 35, and her granddaughter, Karolina, 8, three generations of women fleeing bombed-out Kharkiv in eastern Ukraine. They were on the road so long and without sleep, they no longer knew what day it was.

Day had merged into night and night had become day. It took several minutes of discussion among them to work out that they had left home three days ago.

They queued behind Aleksandra Melnyk, 35, a teacher from Kyiv, and her twin ten-year-old sons, Andriy and Dmytro, who had left the city on Friday 4 March and slept for only two hours. She spoke with defiance: "We will go back home to Kyiv after the victory."

But there was also fear.

"My husband stayed to fight and my parents couldn't travel. They start their life with the Second World War and now they finish their life with this? I would never believe we would use train for evacuation. Train was for holiday. Where to now? It depends on God."

Among them, too, was a group of nine - including three primary school teachers and their children - who escaped from Korosten, northwest of Kyiv, after bombs started to fall.

One of the teachers, Tanya Bordiuk. had pretended to her three-year-old son, Kiril, that the air-raid sirens were "a game that meant he had to hide" - like a scene out of the tragicomic holocaust film Life is Beautiful. But eventually she could pretend no longer.

It had taken them 60 hours to get to the border, where they headed straight for a reception centre. All the groups of women and children we spoke to had left their husbands, fathers and brothers behind.

"They are fighting for Ukraine, they are heroes," Olena said.

They had no idea when they would rejoin their family members.

This is the story of the people we met on Monday morning as they passed through Kroscienko, the southernmost and perhaps most remote of eight border points into Poland.

At any other time, this would be a picturesque place to broach the Polish countryside and head towards the dramatic Carpathian mountains, but these are far from normal times.

More than 1 million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have now entered Poland alone, and with people crossing at a rate of around 120,000 a day, there is a sense here of a country being emptied of its women and children.

Inna, a university administrator, spoke in rapid bursts as she recounted their escape on Friday from scenes of some of the worst devastation of the war so far.

"The Russians bombed us for seven consecutive days and for seven days we were hiding in our basements, too terrified to go out or even sleep," she said.

"Then one bomb landed in my front garden just a few metres away, making a hole three-metres wide, and on the eighth day we headed early for the station.

"My grandchild Karolina was so scared to leave that her hands were shaking and she couldn't get her shoes on. She is eight years old and she was convinced she will die. What has this world come to? We drove through a city that looks completely demolished and we got to the station at 8am. Thousands of people were already on the platform. It took us 11 hours to board a train to Lviv."

Olena, a nurse, said: "The train was completely packed. We were in the corridor, standing room only. All lights had to be turned off because there were fears the Russians could bomb us. Not even allowed to use our mobile phones. We were 21 hours standing in the train, 21 hours not being able to go to the toilet to pee. I looked around and just saw women, all of them crying. It was a train of tears."

They traversed the war-ravaged country and got to Lviv at 4pm the following day.

"We stayed overnight in an orphanage but we were so tired and scared we couldn't sleep," said Inna. It would be another 24 hours before they would reach Poland, having to walk the last two hours and then endure a four-hour queue at the border.

They finally crossed at 8.30am on Monday 7 March carrying a few plastic bags and small backpacks stuffed with essential belongings - and joined another queue for a bus to take them to a reception centre.

While they waited, there were fire pits to keep them warm, hot food served up by charity workers from World Central Kitchen and the Polish fire service and a tent where children drew pictures and played with iPads. The children were very quiet. Olena clutched Karolina's raggedy doll as her daughter ate a bowl of steaming hot soup.

When Karolina asked about her father, Olena said: "Her father is a soldier in a war. He told me they won't let the Russians take Kharkiv. They will fight. I don't know when we will see him." Where were they headed? "I have no plans, no idea," she said.

At a nearby reception centre in a former primary school in the village of Lodyna, we found 160 women and children perched on camp beds crammed into every classroom and corridor.

The group of teachers, including Olena Martynenko, 36, and Tanya, 32, had been there two hours, and were relieved to be out of the cold after their 60-hour escape from Korosten with their five children aged 3 to 15.

Olena said: "The air-raid sirens in Korosten were going six times a day, but last Thursday there was a huge bombing that was very close, shaking and shattering our windows, so we decided it's not safe to stay. The train to Lviv was endless and from there we caught another train that took ten hours to the border at Medyka. After five hours of waiting and the queue hardly moving, the children were so cold that we turned around and caught a bus back to Lviv."

It was a very low point, said Olena. "Our husbands were calling to tell us about bombs continuing to fall on Korosten, and we were crying and homeless in Lviv."

That was when the Red Cross - one of 13 charities The Independent's Refugees Welcome appeal is funding as part of our support for the Disasters Emergency Committee - stepped in.

"Thank God for the Red Cross - they got us hot food and directed us to warm marquees to stay overnight. The next day they helped us find someone to drive us to Kroscienko instead of Medyka because we heard it was only three hours at the border."

Olena added: "This week is International Women's Day and we had planned a special presentation at our school, but now 8th March will be a day to pray for peace and victory." They shared pictures on their phones of bomb debris in their school-yard and of the unfolding local picture. "Where are you?" Olena's husband had earlier texted anxiously. Olena now wanted to know the same of him. She had just heard that bombs were again raining down on Korosten - and that a dozen houses had been destroyed with one dead and five injured.

Tanya said: "The children keep asking when they can go home. Never in my life could I imagine this would happen."

The teachers sat among their bags, but suddenly had to shift because the volunteers running the centre tried to squeeze a few more camp beds into the space. Alongside them, drawing attention, was a young child playing with her two pet rats. In a few hours, the teachers, all colleagues from the same school, would be fanning out across Europe.

Olena and her daughter Maria, 9, were heading to her cousin in Koln, Germany, while Tanya and her son Kiris, 3, were going to stay with friends in Riga in Latvia. They knew where they were headed but had no idea for how long. Back at the border, a long line of vehicles formed of people who had come from all over Europe to pick up relatives, friends and friends of friends.

Among them was Boris, 34, an IT consultant, and his friend Reiner, who had driven from Germany to pick up two mothers and their two children to take to a friend's house in Germany. Boris said: "We expect to be waiting here up to 24 hours. We come to do our bit."

There was a sense of people coming out to help from across Europe, a united effort to provide humanitarian support in the face of an aggressor that has become the common enemy. There was particular gratitude from the Ukrainians for the Poles. They have welcomed refugees, given them free transportation to wherever they want, free healthcare for 30 days, taken Ukrainian children into their schools and removed obstacles to adults seeking work.

There is a sense that the Polish people have risen to the challenge and that this, perhaps, is their finest hour. For Europe and the world, the scale of the humanitarian disaster is yet to be fully calibrated or understood. I watched an endless stream of humanity arrive - past the border post, over the train tracks, pressed up against the doors of coaches that arrived to take yet another load to a reception centre.

One woman, her 14-year-old daughter and their Chihuahua puppy Dolores said they had taken 20 hours to travel from Kyiv. "My brother drove us to a few kilometres from the border and then we walked," she said. "We have left our men behind to come to Poland but we don't know where we will go from here. I am exhausted and sad but also happy in one way." She pointed to the sky. "There are no more bombs over my daughter's head."

Additional reporting and translating by Sofiia Sas

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, click here. To sign the petition click here. If you would like to donate then please click here for our GoFundMe page

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UK help for Ukrainian refugees appears grudging - be prepared for repeated U-turns*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y2-BCB1-JBNF-W3NW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 2:23 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS ANALYSIS,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:3

**Length:** 921 words

**Byline:** Andrew Woodcock

**Highlight:** Britain's response seems slow and limited compared to the EU - the government will face escalating pressure to amend and extend its offer if it holds this line, argues Andrew Woodcock

**Body**

Boris[*Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) has claimed the UK is taking a "very generous and open approach" towards the 1.7 million Ukrainians who have fled their country to escape Vladimir Putin's brutal assaults on civilians.

The scale of the British response, however, is coming under increasingly intense scrutiny after Home Office figures indicated at the weekend that only 50 UK visas had been issued.

There was confusion in Whitehall on Monday as the prime minister suggested the figure was wrong, but could not provide a more accurate number.

Suggestions from home secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) that she was considering a new humanitarian route for victims of the conflict also turned out to be misleading as the Home Office and No 10 clarified that she was referring to existing schemes.

It is understood that around 10,000 Ukrainians had applied to come to the UK by Monday. The government insisted it is working through the backlog as quickly as possible, but offered no indication of how soon applicants can expect a decision.

With Poland opening its borders, taking in 1 million Ukrainians, and the EU offering them freedoms to travel, settle and work across the 27-nation bloc, the UK's response is increasingly looking ungenerous and sluggish.

Smaller countries on [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) 's borders have taken in far more refugees than Britain, with 180,000 in Hungary, 130,000 in Slovakia and around 80,000 each in Romania and Moldova, according to UN figures. More than 183,000 people have moved on from these countries to other destinations in Europe.

France's interior minister Gerald Darmanin condemned Britain for a "totally inadequate response" and "lack of humanity" after Ukrainians trying to reach the UK were turned back at Calais.

At the outset of the Ukrainian crisis, the EU immediately agreed to let in refugees for up to three years without first having to seek asylum.

And last week, the bloc agreed to invoke for the first time the Temporary Protection Directive created at the time of the 2001 Kosovo crisis.

This allows Ukrainians to move freely across the EU, giving them instant rights to live and work within the bloc, along with access to social service benefits like housing and medical care. Under the directive, Ukrainians are also granted temporary residency status without having to go through complex asylum procedures.

In contrast, the UK has targeted specific groups of Ukrainians for assistance and has refused to lift the requirement for visas to enter Britain.

A Ukraine Family Scheme launched last month for relatives of UK residents was initially available only to spouses or partners, children aged under 18 or parents of under-18s, with the government estimating it could see up to 100,000 people come to Britain.

This was later extended to wider family, including grandparents, siblings, children aged over 18 and parents of over-18s, increasing the group potentially eligible to around 200,000.

Entry requirements for English language skills and minimum salary were waived, but applicants were still told to provide documentation such as marriage or birth certificates. However, the Home Office made clear it was willing to consider applications without such papers from people who had fled their homes in fear for their lives.

There have been complaints that refugees were told to submit their applications at UK visa processing centres such as embassies and consulates, meaning long journeys and delays for many of those hoping to come to the UK.

With no centre in Calais, Ukrainians reaching the Channel have been told to go to Paris or Brussels to stake their claims.

A second scheme, the Humanitarian Sponsorship Pathway, will allow access to Ukrainians with no relatives in the UK who can find sponsors - such as councils, charities or businesses - able to support them and provide accommodation during their stay.

No date has yet been set for this route to open, and eligibility requirements are not yet known.

Meanwhile, Ukrainians already in the UK on work and short visit visas have been told they can extend them.

Johnson and Patel have fiercely resisted demands to lift the requirement for visas altogether, arguing this would create a security risk and undermine public support in the UK for the offer of sanctuary.

Patel said Russian troops were "seeking to infiltrate" Ukrainian forces and there were "extremists on the ground" in Ukraine.

Given Putin's "willingness to do violence on British soil", Patel said, "we cannot suspend any security or biometric checks on people we welcome to our country".

As TV screens fill with scenes of civilians being deliberately targeted by Russian troops, the UK's stance risks appearing grudging and inadequate. The government risks being forced into repeated U-turns as it gradually amends and extends its offer of help to people who have no time to spare in finding a safe haven from war.

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**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*5 talking points ahead of England’s clash with Ukraine at Wembley*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67VR-TR31-DY4H-K17K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 25, 2023 Saturday 6:15 PM GMT

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**Section:** FOOTBALL,SPORT; Version:2

**Length:** 643 words

**Byline:** Mark Mann-Bryans

**Highlight:** The Football Association has invited more than 1,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and their host families to attend the qualifier.

**Body**

[*England*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/england) host [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) at [*Wembley*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wembley) on Sunday looking to make it two wins from two at the start of their Euro 2024 qualification campaign.

However, the football will take a back seat as a delegation of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and their host families have been invited to the game as war in the country rages on.

Here, the PA news agency takes a look at some of the talking points ahead of the game as England look to build on their 2-1 win in [*Italy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/italy) on Thursday.

United with Ukraine

1,000 Ukrainians, and the families who’ve welcomed them into their homes across Britain, will attend the England v Ukraine EURO 2024 qualifying fixture as guests of The FA and Wembley Stadium.Read more here: [*https://t.co/Zo4glwW2Pt*](https://t.co/Zo4glwW2Pt) [*pic.twitter.com/MUAAhRwRDF*](https://t.co/MUAAhRwRDF) — Wembley Stadium (@wembleystadium) [*March 21, 2023*](https://twitter.com/wembleystadium/status/1638169100102012928?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The Football Association has invited more than 1,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and their host families to attend the Euro 2024 qualifier at Wembley on Sunday.The invitations have been made to people involved in the Government’s Homes for Ukraine Scheme which launched last year in response to Russia’s invasion of the country.There are at present around 117,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the UK, many of them housed with people who volunteered to open up their homes to those fleeing the conflict.A chance for Chilwell? [*@BenChilwell*](https://twitter.com/BenChilwell?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/2DgrS0eN7W*](https://t.co/2DgrS0eN7W) — England (@England) [*March 25, 2023*](https://twitter.com/England/status/1639665013261492224?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Ben Chilwell will be chomping at the bit to get a rare outing at left-back and lay down a marker.[*Luke Shaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/luke-shaw) was the only recognised left-back in England’s World Cup squad in Qatar. He has shone for his country in recent years, with Gareth Southgate’s only other options coming from elsewhere on the pitch as square pegs.Shaw, though, is banned for the visit of Ukraine after picking up two yellow cards in Thursday’s win over Italy and he has legitimate competition in the shape of fit-again Chilwell.The Chelsea defender missed the World Cup through injury but is now in fine form for his club, giving Southgate yet another positive selection headache.One step to GermanyIt may only be the second game of the qualification process but victory for England against another of the stronger Group C opponents could already have them set for Germany next summer.Winning in Italy and then seeing off Ukraine at Wembley would be a fine start for Southgate and his players, with favourable games against Malta and North Macedonia next up in June.There is still the visit of Italy to come, as well as potentially tricky trips to face Ukraine and Skopje, but England would already be thinking of sealing qualification.Time for Toney? [*@ivantoney24*](https://twitter.com/ivantoney24?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/S2akasZc4q*](https://t.co/S2akasZc4q) — England (@England) [*March 25, 2023*](https://twitter.com/England/status/1639567801932480512?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Harry Kane became England’s all-time leading goalscorer when he converted from the penalty spot in the Naples victory.

He is undoubtedly the first-choice striker among Southgate’s central attacking options and rarely misses a game for his country.

Should Southgate opt to rest his skipper on Sunday, Ivan Toney could be in line for his England bow – the Brentford forward having yet to make his debut despite being called up on two occasions.

Toney has hit 28 Premier League goals in a year-and-a-half with Brentford and his form has kept him on the international scene despite ongoing Football Association charges relating to gambling.

54 not out

Kane surpassed Wayne Rooney to move onto 54 senior England goals.

The striker had already become Tottenham’s leading marksman earlier this season as he moved clear of Jimmy Greaves and now he is unrivalled in front of goal for his country.

There was a special presentation in the away changing room in Naples but Kane’s latest achievement will also be acknowledged ahead of kick-off against Ukraine as he looks to build on his record-breaking total.

**Load-Date:** March 25, 2023

**End of Document**



[*5 talking points ahead of England’s clash with Ukraine at Wembley*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67VX-T6J1-DY4H-K0DM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 26, 2023 Sunday 12:24 PM GMT

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**Section:** FOOTBALL,SPORT; Version:1

**Length:** 643 words

**Byline:** Mark Mann-Bryans

**Highlight:** The Football Association has invited more than 1,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and their host families to attend the qualifier.

**Body**

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**Load-Date:** March 26, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Liverpudlian bringing Ukrainian aid workers to Eurovision*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6869-BND1-JBNF-W2HM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 9, 2023 Tuesday 10:35 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 679 words

**Byline:** Aisling Grace

**Highlight:** Tim Johnson is giving a group of volunteers a ‘break’ by taking them to Liverpool for the festivities and a tour of Merseyside.

**Body**

A [*Liverpool*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liverpool) man is giving a group of his fellow aid workers, who “have put their lives on hold” by assisting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, a break by helping them travel to the UK for Eurovision and a tour of [*Merseyside*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/merseyside).

Tim Johnson, a 37-year-old IT consultant, is helping at least 12 aid workers – six Ukrainians and six Poles – who have worked with Ukrainians affected by war to obtain visas to attend Eurovision events in Liverpool and enjoy a tour, which will include a visit to Anfield football stadium and the Royal Liver Building.

Two of the group are travelling from Ukraine via [*Warsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warsaw) to attend Eurovision Song Contest events, while the rest are coming from [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland).

Mr Johnson’s experience with aid work began in Poland at the start of the war, when he was staying in the country with his Polish fiance and decided to pitch in and buy large quantities of food for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

The Liverpudlian has been helping ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** ever since, as he travels back to Poland around once a month to volunteer and has fundraised in the UK for Ukrainians who have fled the war.

He described the aid workers he has worked alongside as “really special people”.

He told the PA news agency: “They’ve suffered everything a refugee has suffered, and then they’ve chosen to help other people arriving.

“They deserve a break and, as Ukrainians, they deserve to be in Liverpool for their Eurovision year.”

Mr Johnson said “one of the team of absolutely phenomenal people” assisting fellow ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** was overjoyed to learn she will be travelling to Liverpool.

“She doesn’t speak any [*English*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/english) but she opened up her passport, found the UK visa inside and she phoned me up crying, saying, ‘Thank you, thank you, thank you’,” he said.

“Those kinds of moments stick with you.”

“It makes it worth it, that these guys will get a break.”

When Mr Johnson saw Liverpool had been announced as host of Eurovision 2023, he was struck by a “random brainwave” and decided to help some aid volunteers get to the city for the contest.

Ukraine emerged as the champions of Eurovision last year but Liverpool was chosen as the host country for this year’s contest as Russian attacks on the war-torn country continue.

Mr Johnson said he was helping the aid workers with their visa applications and offering “moral support” during the “long, hard process”.

He said the visa application process involves a “massive amount of paperwork” and requires the two people travelling from Ukraine to wait in Warsaw while their applications are being sorted.

“Imagine how someone would feel, having left a war zone, effectively, and then they have to sit and go through all that process,” he said.

“As a British citizen, it’s interesting to see because you don’t normally see that side.”

Although Mr Johnson was not able to secure tickets for the Eurovision finals or semi-finals, the group will be watching the final rehearsals for the first semi-final and the final.

He said: “They’ll see the final show in its entirety in the afternoon of the final day and then we’ve got tickets for the Eurovision Village for them to see it on the big screens.”

The volunteers will make the most of their trip to the UK, with Mr Johnson saying he “has a whole week planned” for the special guests.

He said he is funding the trips without the assistance of any charities and “lots of local companies and tourist attractions have helped”.

The owner of The Hanover Hotel, a friend, has “very kindly given us rooms and accommodation for all the visitors and he’s done it for basically cost price”, he said.

The group will be given tours of Anfield and the Royal Liver Building 360 and will take a day trip to the capital to enjoy a whirl around the London Eye and be hosted on the viewing platform of The Shard.

“The response that we’ve had, it’s been absolutely brilliant,” Mr Johnson said.

Reflecting on the long process of organising the trip, he said: “If you have an idea for something like this, don’t give up on it.”

He added: “I’m quite tired at the moment because of all the logistics but it feels amazing that we’re going make this happen.”

**Load-Date:** May 9, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine's Zelenskyy visits neighboring Romania to discuss security and boost ties*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69C4-W471-DY4H-K1M8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

October 10, 2023 Tuesday 10:59 AM GMT

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**Length:** 377 words

**Byline:** Stephen McGrath and Andreea Alexandru

**Highlight:** Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has traveled to neighboring Romania for talks with his counterpart on regional security and strengthening bilateral ties against the backdrop of Russia's invasion of his country

**Body**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy traveled to neighboring Romania on Tuesday for talks with his counterpart on regional security and strengthening bilateral ties against the backdrop of Russia’s invasion of his country.

Zelenskyy met with President Klaus Iohannis in the capital, Bucharest. The two are also expected to discuss security cooperation in the [*Black Sea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/black-sea) region, Zelenskyy said on X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter.

After he arrived in Romania, Zelenskyy described the NATO and European Union member country as “a friend who came to our help on our darkest day and whose support gets stronger with time.”

In recent weeks, [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) has carried out sustained attacks on Ukraine’s Danube River ports — located just across the river from Romania — as Moscow aims to disrupt Ukraine’s ability to export grain to world markets. Romania has confirmed drone fragment findings on its territory, the type used by the Russian army near its border with [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Ukraine and Romania signed an agreement in August to try and boost Kyiv’s grain exports through Romania after Russia withdrew from a wartime agreement a month earlier that ensured safe passage through the Black Sea. Romania’s Black Sea port of Constanta has become a key transport route for the war-torn nation’s grain amid the war.

“Ukraine is grateful for Romania’s support, which strengthens our state, as well as its constructive solidarity, which enables our nations to be security donors for the world, notably in food security,” Zelenskyy said on Tuesday.

Ukraine is a major global supplier of wheat, barley, corn and vegetable oil and has struggled since Russia’s invasion to get its food products to parts of the world in need. After Russia blocked the grain's Black Sea passage, that left more expensive overland routes through Europe as the main path for Ukraine’s exports.

The Ukrainian president's trip to Romania is his first official visit since Russia launched its full-scale invasion last year. In the wake of the invasion, millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fled to Romania before moving on to other countries.

Around 85,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are currently registered in Romania, under the EU’s temporary protection scheme.

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McGrath reported from Sighisoara, Romania.

**Load-Date:** October 10, 2023

**End of Document**



[*AOC slams 'stark contrast' between treatment of Ukraine refugees versus asylum seekers from Haiti and Syria*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X0-0XG1-JBNF-W10D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 2, 2022 Wednesday 11:27 AM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:2

**Length:** 538 words

**Byline:** Alisha Rahaman Sarkar

**Highlight:** 'We really need to make sure when we talk about accepting refugees we are meaning it for everybody'

**Body**

[*Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/alexandria-ocasio-cortez) said the US should treat all refugees in the same manner with which it currently treats [***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) ***refugees***, pointing to the "stark contrast" in how governments have dealt with Syrian and Haitian refugees.

The congresswoman's remarks on Tuesday come in the backdrop of an impending humanitarian crisis in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , which has been battling an invasion by [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) on 24 February.

The congresswoman said the US should ensure all refugees are equally accepted, regardless of where they come from.

"I think the world is watching and many immigrants and refugees are watching, and how the world treats Ukraine and ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** should be how we are treating all refugees in the United States," Ms Ocasio-Cortez told MSNBC.

While most [*Ukrainian citizens fleeing their country*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-update-today-putin-zelensky-b2026409.html) are [*seeking refuge in Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-refugees-flee-hungary-b2026004.html) , the US on Sunday pledged $54m (£41m) in humanitarian assistance.

This would be channeled through nonprofits to provide food, safe drinking water, shelter and emergency healthcare, US secretary of state Antony Blinken said in a statement.

The congresswoman said there was a "stark contrast" in the way the world treated Syrian refugees versus the way [***Ukrainian******refugees*** *are being treated*](https://www.independent.co.uk/world/ukraine-racism-refugees-russia-war-un-b2025771.html) , despite both countries having gone through similar catastrophes.

"I think the way we are looking at immediate granting of TPS [Temporary Protected Status] to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, which is what we need to be doing, as well as many others, is something that we need to keep in mind," the [*Democrat leader said*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/democratic-socialists-of-america-russia-invasion-ukraine-b2024540.html).

Every singlewordofthis! Thank you [*@AOC*](https://twitter.com/AOC?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) for calling it out! [*pic.twitter.com/LdVJmMQNpN*](https://t.co/LdVJmMQNpN) - Murad Awawdeh (@HeyItsMurad) [*March 2, 2022*](https://twitter.com/HeyItsMurad/status/1498889316499705867?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

TPS is a humanitarian deportation relief programme that grants work permit access to foreign nationals whose native countries have been battered by war or natural disasters.

"We really need to make sure that when we talk about accepting refugees that we are meaning it for everybody, no matter where you come from," she said, citing the example of [*the unjust treatment towards Haitian refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/haiti-refugees-whip-border-force-biden-trump-b1924184.html) by the US government, including the past and the current Biden administration.

The congresswoman pointed to the thousands of people who were [*denied legal refuge on the US-Mexico border*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/haiti-refugee-camp-del-rio-texas-b1926616.html).

"If we grant TPS to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, it is also an opportunity to create a path to citizenship for TPS recipients... While there is a risk, there is also a profound opportunity for us to make the crooked path straight on this issue," she added, explaining that TPS recipients did not have a "concrete path" to US citizenship.

On Monday, 42 senators across the party lines had asked president [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) to temporarily shield those Ukrainians living in the US from deportation.

The group of Democratic and Republican lawmakers said the Biden administration should offer access to TPS as the ongoing war has made it "too dangerous" for deportees to return.

The congresswoman's remarks assume significance as several commentators [*call out the discriminatory manner*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/ukraine-refugees-racial-bias-western-media-b2024864.html) with which international media outlets have covered the invasion and [*the contrast in policies that Ukraine's neighbours have adopted*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugees-response-europe-racist-b2024840.html) in granting shelter to them compared to those who seek asylum from outside Europe.

**Load-Date:** March 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*AOC slams 'stark contrast' between treatment of Ukraine refugees versus asylum seekers from Haiti and Syria*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X1-5G81-JBNF-W4XM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 2, 2022 Wednesday 5:20 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 538 words

**Byline:** Alisha Rahaman Sarkar

**Highlight:** 'We really need to make sure when we talk about accepting refugees we are meaning it for everybody'

**Body**

[*Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/alexandria-ocasio-cortez) said the US should treat all refugees in the same manner with which it currently treats [***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) ***refugees***, pointing to the "stark contrast" in how governments have dealt with Syrian and Haitian refugees.

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Every singlewordofthis! Thank you [*@AOC*](https://twitter.com/AOC?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) for calling it out! [*pic.twitter.com/LdVJmMQNpN*](https://t.co/LdVJmMQNpN) - Murad Awawdeh (@HeyItsMurad) [*March 2, 2022*](https://twitter.com/HeyItsMurad/status/1498889316499705867?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

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**Load-Date:** March 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Pro-Russian graffiti at Antrim site 'completely at odds with local community'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6593-MGK1-DY4H-K3F2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 23, 2022 Saturday 7:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 270 words

**Byline:** Rebecca Black

**Highlight:** The graffiti was daubed on the road at the Dark Hedges site made famous worldwide after appearing on Game Of Thrones.

**Body**

Pro-Russian graffiti on one of Northern Ireland's most recognisable roads has been slammed as "completely at odds" with the local community.

It appeared at the Dark Hedges, a route in North [*Antrim*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/antrim) which was made famous worldwide after being featured in Game Of Thrones.

The incident comes as a number of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the Russian invasion of their country have started to arrive in Northern Ireland.

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** welcomed to Ballymoney despite graffiti [*https://t.co/kNsHqX3wkn*](https://t.co/kNsHqX3wkn) via [*@duponline*](https://twitter.com/duponline?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Mervyn Storey [*@J\_Donaldson\_MP*](https://twitter.com/J_Donaldson_MP?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) - DUP (@duponline) [*April 23, 2022*](https://twitter.com/duponline/status/1517919425441288192?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

[*DUP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dup) [*North Antrim*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/north-antrim) Assembly Candidate Mervyn Storey condemned those behind the graffiti.

He said the sentiment of the graffiti is completely at odds with the welcome that arriving ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have received to the area.

"This is a wanton act of vandalism at one of Northern Ireland's most iconic locations," he said.

"It is completely at odds with the warm welcome our local community provide to tourists from all over the world who come to see what the Dark Hedges and the North Coast have to offer."

Mr Storey said he has recently been able to welcome refugees from Ukraine into his church community.

"It is despicable that they should have to encounter this type of behaviour glorifying Russia's oppressive campaign of terror in their homeland.

"Our support must be with the people of Ukraine," he said.

"I will be working closely with local authorities and the [*PSNI*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/psni) to ensure this graffiti is removed immediately and those responsible held to account."

The Police Service of Northern Ireland have been contacted for a response.

**Load-Date:** April 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Come in from the cold; A 15th-century Romanian monastery has opened its doors to 100 Ukrainian refugees fleeing the war, writes Luiza Ilie*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6532-2Y81-JCS0-D44D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 26, 2022 Saturday

First Edition

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**Section:** THE MAGAZINE; Pg. 41

**Length:** 471 words

**Byline:** LUIZA ILIE

**Body**

When Svetlana and her family from the city of Kryvyi Rih in central Ukraine reached the snow-covered Putna monastery in the rolling hills of northeastern Romania, they had been on the road for four days.

The monks living at the remote 15th-century Romanian Orthodox monastery, a pilgrimage site that sits in a valley covered in dense forest, have opened its doors to people like Svetlana who have fled Ukraine to neighbouring countries in their millions since Russia began its invasion on 24 February.

Svetlana left her home city with her daughter Anna, six-year-old grandson Maksim and two other female relatives. Anna's husband and her two siblings stayed behind, helping with humanitarian aid.

"We would go home in a second, our souls are so heavy," Svetlana says. "We are sorry we had to separate from our family. Right now we feel fear and confusion, we don't know what to do next."

As she weeps, Father Gherasim Soca quietly embraces and comforts her. Later that day, villagers brave a snow storm to attend a service at which monks pray for the people of Ukraine, inside the large stone church with shimmering icons.

"The majority of people want to reach their final destination, usually somewhere in the west, as soon as possible, and if they can, they choose to spend the night near the border towns," says Father Gherasim.

"Putna is a little more remote, but for those who are not in a rush, they are not crowded here, each family have their own room. I see them go to church and praying, getting comfort. It helps a lot."

More than 412,000 Ukrainians have fled to Romania, where thousands of volunteers, churches, non-governmental organisations and government agencies are providing food, shelter, clothes and transportation.

In northeast Romania, the Suceava and Radauti Orthodox archdiocese has offered hundreds of beds in monasteries as well as parish houses. They also have a permanent presence at the Siret border and adjacent train station including priests and monks who speak Ukrainian or Russian, offering food and help.

"A large part of Ukrainians are going to relatives who work abroad," says Father Alexandru Flavian Sava, the archdiocese's spokesperson. "To them, it is more comforting to move on than stop so close to the border and the violence beyond."

Father Gherasim says roughly 100 people, mostly women and children, have so far taken shelter at Putna.

Among them is a couple who come with their baby from Ivano-Frankivsk. The father used his dual Romanian passport to leave, as Ukrainian men of conscription age are not allowed to.

"We have a little girl. We left because we are afraid for us and her," says the father, who wishes to remain anonymous. He says they have come to stay at Putna before continuing further west because they have visited before.

"We're afraid because we don't know how it will end."

**Load-Date:** March 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Free public transport scheme for Ukrainians arriving into Northern Ireland*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6534-F281-DY4H-K2J4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 26, 2022 Saturday 6:47 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 241 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving into Northern Ireland will be able to receive free public transport from their point of entry to their final destination.

**Body**

A free public transport scheme for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** will be introduced in [*Northern Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/northern-ireland).

Infrastructure Minister Nichola Mallon made the announcement on Saturday, confirming that all ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving into Northern Ireland will be able to receive free public transport from their point of entry to a final destination.

The temporary scheme will begin on all Translink bus and rail services from March 30.

Ms Mallon said: "In the last few weeks, many Ukrainians, mostly women and children, have been forced to make the heart-breaking decision to leave their homes and their loved ones behind in search of safety.

"While many of those refugees are staying in neighbouring countries, some will be travelling to Northern Ireland to join family members or their host family."

To benefit from the scheme, Ukrainians will be asked to show public transport staff a passport or ID, as well as evidence of a boarding pass or some other documentation proving that they have arrived in Northern Ireland within the last seven days.

The Department of Infrastructure is asking workers to show discretion as they implement the scheme.

Ms Mallon said: "Many have endured an arduous, and indeed a dangerous and frightening, journey to make their way to safety.

"It is the least we can do to make this final part of their journey a little easier and help show that Northern Ireland is a place of safety and sanctuary for those from Ukraine who need our help."

**Load-Date:** March 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Keir Starmer says Home Office in 'complete mess' over Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y7-51T1-DY4H-K1FS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 4:37 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,INDY TV; Version:1

**Length:** 92 words

**Byline:** Ross Martin-Pavitt

**Body**

[*Labour*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/labour) leader Sir [*Keir Starmer*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/keir-starmer) has accused the [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) of a chaotic response to the ***Ukraine*** ***refugee crisis***.

Speaking at King's College London, he said: "It's very important that we provide a route to a sanctuary for those that are fleeing for their lives."

"The Home Office is in a complete mess about this, they keep changing the rules," Starmer added.

To sign our [*Refugees Welcome campaign petition*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/a%20) [*click here and if you are able to donate then please*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-a%20) [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome)

[*Click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/newsletters?itm_channel=native&itm_campaign=newsletters&itm_content=video-articles) to sign up to our newsletters.

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Months into war, Ukraine refugees slow to join EU workforce*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6630-MR31-DY4H-K03X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 4, 2022 Thursday 7:24 AM GMT

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**Length:** 1076 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Nearly six months after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, many refugees are still struggling to find jobs in their European Union host countries, despite the EU's streamlined process for Ukrainians to live and work in its 27 member nations

**Body**

Liudmyla Chudyjovych used to have a career as a lawyer in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and big plans for the future. That was before the Russian invasion forced the 41-year-old woman to put her daughter's safety first, and leave both her job and home behind.

Since fleeing the town of Stryj in western Ukraine in May, Chudyjovych has found a new job in the [*Czech Republic*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/czech-republic). But instead of practicing law, she's had to settle for work as a housekeeper at a hotel in the capital, [*Prague*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prague).

“It’s just a different stage of my career,” she said. “That’s simply how it is.”

One of the millions of refugees who have fled Ukraine since the Feb. 24 Russian invasion, Chudyjovych considers herself lucky to have a job at all. Not fluent enough in either Czech or English, Chudyjovych said she didn't mind the work as long as she and her daughter are safe.

Although the European Union introduced regulations early in the war to make it easier for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to live and work in its 27 member nations while they decide whether to seek asylum or return home, many are only now starting to find jobs — and many are still struggling.

Some 6.5 million Ukrainians, have entered the EU since February, according to Frontex, the EU Border and Coast Guard Agency, streaming into neighboring countries before many moved on to more prosperous nations in the West. Around half have since returned to Ukraine.

Only a relatively small number of those who stayed had entered the EU labor market by mid-June, according to the European Commission.

A recent Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development report looking at the potential impact ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** will have on the EU workforce projected it will be about twice as large as the 2014-2017 inflow of refugees, which included many fleeing war in Syria.

The study estimated the Czech Republic, which has the lowest unemployment rate in Europe, would add the most Ukrainians to its workforce by the end of the year, with an increase of 2.2%, followed by [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) and Estonia. About 1.2 million workers would be added to the European workforce overall, mainly in service occupations, the report said.

Still, the influx is unlikely to drive down wages or boost unemployment in European countries, many of which face labor shortages due in part to their aging populations.

“Considering the labor needs of the main host countries, a negative impact in terms of employment or wages for the resident population ... seems very unlikely,” the report concluded.

The EU effort to help the Ukrainians has won praise from the U.N. Refugee Agency and other rights groups dealing with migration. But they also note a major difference in the treatment of people fleeing wars or poverty in the Middle East, Africa or Asia, who often have to wait years before overcoming the hurdles for acquiring residency papers or work permits.

Still, there are many challenges ahead for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** looking for work.

In addition to language barriers, skilled workers from Ukraine often lack documentation to prove their professional credentials to get better-paid employment. Their diplomas may not be recognized in their host countries, meaning many have to take language and training courses before they can seek professional opportunities.

Because men between the ages of 18 and 60 are banned from leaving Ukraine, many refugees are women with children, which can be an additional obstacle for trying to find work. Many women are still weighing their options and might decide to return home for the start of the school year in September, officials say, despite the war being far from over.

In Poland, which has taken in about 1 million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, more than any other EU nation, just over a third have found work, according to the Polish minister of labor and social policy, Marlena Malag. Some have gotten jobs as nurses or Ukrainian language teachers in Polish schools, while others are working as housekeepers or waitresses.

In Portugal, some of the country’s largest companies have special job recruitment programs for Ukrainians, while the Institute for Employment and Professional Training offers free Portuguese language classes.

In Germany, about half of some 900,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have registered with the country’s employment agency, though no figures are available on how many have actually found jobs. The Mediendienst Integration group, which tracks migration in Germany, says about half have university degrees, but doesn’t specify how many have been able to work in their professional fields.

Natalia Borysova was chief editor of a morning TV show in the western Ukrainian city of Lviv before fleeing with her daughters, 11 and 13, in March, and settling in the German city of Cologne. She applied for low-paying jobs such as housekeeping, but ultimately decided to turn them down to focus on learning German.

“I’m an optimist and I am sure that I will find a job after learning the language,” the 41-year-old said via WhatsApp. “Perhaps on a different level than in Ukraine, but in the same field. Now it just doesn’t make sense for me to work for the minimum wage.”

Borysova, like other ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, receives an allowance from the German government that helps the family pay for food and housing, but said she wants to return to work as soon as she masters German.

Chudyjovych is among some 400,000 Ukrainians in the Czech Republic who have registered for special long-term visas that grant access to jobs, health care, education and other benefits. Nearly 80,000 have already found work, the government said.

At the Background café in Prague's Old Town, 15 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** work with the Czech staff as part of a project sponsored by the Mama Coffee chain. The refugees also receive free language classes and other programs.

Lisa Himich, 22, from Kyiv, likes it and says "it feels like home here.”

For Chudyjovych, working as a housekeeper is far better than living in fear and under the constant sound of air raid sirens.

“I thought I would miss Ukraine and be homesick but that hasn’t happened at all," Chudyjovych said. "It’s peaceful here and I feel like a human being.”

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Gec reported from Belgrade, Serbia. Associated Press writers Renata Brito in Barcelona, Spain; Vanessa Gera in Warsaw, Poland; Kirsten Grieshaber in Berlin; Jamey Keaten in Geneva; Lorne Cook in Brussels, and Barry Hatton in Lisbon, Portugal, contributed.

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Follow the AP’s coverage of the Russia-Ukraine war at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** August 4, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Irish support for Ukrainians 'could cost three billion euro in 2023'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:659P-29K1-JBNF-W34G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 26, 2022 Tuesday 10:10 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 269 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** Taoiseach Micheal Martin said the Government will do 'everything we possibly can' to provide for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving in Ireland.

**Body**

Ireland's premier has said his [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) will do "everything we possibly can" to provide for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving in [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland).

It came as Public Expenditure Minister Michael McGrath said the Government is preparing to spend around three billion euro (£2.5 billion) in 2023 on welcoming and supporting those arriving from the war-torn country.

Taoiseach Micheal Martin, speaking on his way to a [*Cabinet*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cabinet) meeting set to be dominated by the war in Ukraine, said he had met refugees over the weekend.

"Their gratitude to the kindness of the people of Ireland was heartfelt," he said.

"This is a horrific war that is having a terrible toll on families and, in a shared humanity, we must do everything we possibly can within our energies and with our resources to do what we can.

"We want this war to end; it should end, because too much life has been lost."

Around 25,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have now arrived in the Republic of Ireland, putting pressure on the Government to find housing and accommodation.

[*Mass*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mass) and emergency accommodation centres have already started to be used.

Mr McGrath said the "primary focus" of Cabinet discussions on Tuesday will be accommodation for refugees.

He said ministers will be "looking at all of the options that are available to Government to find accommodation as quickly as possible".

"The system is now under real strain and we are at the point of offering accommodation that is not at the standard we would like but is necessary because ultimately these refugees are fleeing war and our first duty is to provide safety and security for them and to meet their basic needs," he said.

**Load-Date:** April 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Online searches for ‘Ukrainian refugee porn’ and ‘Ukrainian rape’ surge 300% as Russian war rages*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:661B-HPK1-JBNF-W27V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 27, 2022 Wednesday 4:24 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 525 words

**Byline:** Thomas Kingsley

**Highlight:** Researchers claim the surge in the search terms is linked to growing trafficking of refugees

**Body**

There has been a 300 per cent increase in online search for the terms “Ukrainian refugee porn” and “Ukrainian rape” between March and June, new analysis has revealed.

Global internet searches for derogatory terms specifically relating to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have surged in the past three months, with [*Thomson Reuters*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/thomson-reuters) claiming this is linked to growing sexual exploitation and trafficking of refugees.

According to the research by Reuters, these search terms did not feature in a previous analysis conducted in March, indicating a disturbing new shift towards searches specifically seeking content which sexually exploits ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

The analysis also shows that overall searches for terms such as “Ukrainian porn” remain at consistently higher levels now than prior to the war.

The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) claim the surge in the search terms demonstrate that people leaving Ukraine are being preyed upon by criminal organisations.

As a result of the findings, OSCE and Thomson Reuters partnered to launch the “Be Safe” campaign. The new digital awareness campaign aims to reach ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and provide them critical information on how to spot the warning signs of traffickers, minimise the risks and get assistance.

Commenting on the findings, Val Richey, OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings said: “As millions of Ukrainians flee their country, we all have a responsibility to help keep them safe – traffickers are seeking to turn their vulnerability into profit.

“Through the ‘Be Safe’ campaign we aim to equip people with knowledge to make informed choices and access help if they need it. We need to share the word so that we can inform as many Ukrainians as possible on how they can stay aware and stay safe.”

“Our analysis shows that internet demand for derogatory material relating to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** is driving traffickers to coerce, lure and grown women and children into exploitation.

“Offers of employment or financial assistance are sadly all too often used to trap women and children into trafficking. We are partnering with the OSCE to mobilize the global community to recognize the need to act now to protect these vulnerable people from exploitation”.

The UN refugee agency warned at the start of the conflict of growing concerns over how to protect the most vulnerable refugees from being targeted by human traffickers or becoming victims of other forms of exploitation.

The Migration Data Portal notes that humanitarian crises such as those associated with conflicts “can exacerbate pre-existing trafficking trends and give rise to new ones” and that traffickers can thrive on “the inability of families and communities to protect themselves and their children.”

A 2020 human trafficking report by the European Commission, the EU’s executive branch, estimates the annual global profit from the crime is 29.4 billion euros ($32 billion).

It says that sexual exploitation is the most common form of human trafficking in the 27-nation bloc and that nearly three-quarters of all victims are female, with almost every fourth victim a child.

**Load-Date:** July 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*The Tories are still the Nasty Party - look at how they're treating Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y8-N6C1-JBNF-W1WS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 4:47 PM GMT

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**Section:** LETTERS,VOICES; Version:2

**Length:** 991 words

**Highlight:** Letters to the editor: our readers share their views. Please send your letters to [*letters@independent.co.uk*](mailto:letters@independent.co.uk)

**Body**

I feel ashamed to be British when I hear that our government has so far granted only a miserly 300 visas to people fleeing from war-torn [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , when other nations are showing enormous generosity and opening their doors to tens of thousands.

Back in 2002, Theresa May famously said that the Tory party was viewed as the "Nasty Party" and right now, it really doesn't seem as if much has changed.

To be so unwelcoming to these desperate evacuees who are literally fleeing for their lives is a disgrace. Surely our country is better than this?

Rosemary Macri

Clanfield, Hampshire

Home Office staffing

There appears to be something of a staffing problem in the Home Office, certainly insofar as processing [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) is concerned.

If this is so, perhaps [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) could have a word with Jacob Rees-Mogg. I seem to recall only quite recently he was in the process of getting rid of 64,000 civil servants. I can't think they will all have gone.

Ian Wingfield

Bamford, Derbyshire

Britain's global reputation

Once again this Tory government is trashing Britain's reputation in the world, this time with its mean-spirited and incompetent handling of the Ukrainian refugee crisis.

As Yvette Cooper has pointed out, they claim to be leading and world-beating, while we are shamed by smaller poorer countries with their generosity and swift response in coping with a vast influx of refugees.

As with Windrush, Brexit and so many other issues it is Patel's alarmingly incompetent Home Office and Johnson's mendacious boosterism that sit at the heart of this mess.

We cannot vote this government out yet, but an element of regime change with some more balanced Tory politicians at the helm would certainly help.

Gavin Turner

Gunton, Norfolk

Do the right thing

Twice in the 20th century we British were called upon to stand by two European countries, Belgium and Poland, who were being threatened by a larger bullying nation. On both occasions and notwithstanding the willingness of the bully to do violence to ourselves, we answered the call.

Now, we are being called to play a different role in another European war by shielding and giving sanctuary to Ukrainian people.

I do not understand why Mr Johnson and Ms Patel cannot wholeheartedly join with our European friends and allies in the policy of help they have agreed. I do not believe our home secretary has the mindset to deal with this crisis. Their lack of action shames us all.

Sometimes it is necessary to just do the right thing as a matter of principle and, as in 1914 and 1939, worry about the consequences later. Come on, Ms Patel, step up to the plate and do the right thing.

Mike Crean

Hereford

Johnson's grip on power

What does it say about our political system that it takes the deaths and injuries of hundreds, and the misery of millions, in Ukraine to ensure that our deeply dishonest and disreputable prime minister can maintain his tenuous grip on power?

What does it say about prospective Tory voters that the Conservative Party hierarchy is clearly convinced that their grip on power depends so heavily on fostering a fear of, and hostility towards, foreigners?

What does it say about the rest of us that we have allowed this utterly shameful situation to come about?

D Maughan Brown

York

Breathing space after Covid

I read [*Jenny Eclair's column*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/voices/putin-russia-ukraine-refugees-b2030036.html) with more than a nod of agreement. This war in Europe seems fantastical and so removed from our grateful, lived experience. She is right too that many of us believed that the worst would not happen, Putin was simply playing war games on the Ukrainian border and the strong winds of condemnation would make him see sense.

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment, sign up to our free weekly Voices Dispatches newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

Like her, I feel aggrieved that after two long years of living with Covid, the world deserved a breathing space of normality and enjoyment as people came out of hibernation and we could all exhale gratefully.

But no. As we look on with horror at the unfolding daily nightmare pictures of men, women and children fleeing for their lives, there is a real sense of depression and angst. We - and the government - should do all we can to alleviate the intolerable burden foisted on the Ukrainian people at this time of crisis.

Judith A Daniels

Great Yarmouth, Norfolk

Jewish refugees

There are many shocking analogies to be made between the current Ukrainian-Russian war and the world of the late 1930s.

One of the most outrageous is the comparison between Britain's treatment of Jewish refugees in the 1930s and the current government's attitude to Ukrainians fleeing the war. Jews trying to come to Britain had to have sponsors and were closely vetted; preference was given to those with skills, who would add something to Britain's national product.

Thousands were denied a visa and ended up victims of Hitler's genocide. Are we going to repeat this history, or open our borders as the countries of eastern Europe are generously doing?

At the moment, the prime minister is going to be remembered as a second Chamberlain rather than a shadow Churchill.

Professor Richard Overy

Ashford

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*The Tories are still the Nasty Party - look at how they're treating Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YD-JPY1-JCS0-D12N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 9, 2022 Wednesday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 38

**Length:** 860 words

**Body**

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As Yvette Cooper has pointed out, they claim to be leading and world-beating, while we are shamed by smaller poorer countries with their generosity and swift response in coping with a vast influx of refugees.

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<strong>Breathing space after Covid</strong>

I read Jenny Eclair's column with more than a nod of agreement (How many of us in the UK would offer our homes up to a Ukrainian family?, Voices, yesterday). This war in Europe seems fantastical and so removed from our grateful, lived experience. She is right too that many of us believed that the worst would not happen, Putin was simply playing war games on the Ukrainian border and the strong winds of condemnation would make him see sense.

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Professor Richard Overy Ashford

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugees may be housed in B&Bs indefinitely under new laws quietly passed by government*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65FR-V4V1-DY4H-K2TP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 15, 2022 Sunday 7:30 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 955 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Exclusive: Ministers accused of creating 'two-tier system' that 'strips away homeless rights' of refugees

**Body**

[*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) and [*Afghan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/afghan) [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) in the UK could be housed in B&Bs indefinitely under new laws quietly pushed through by the government, prompting accusations of a "two-tier system" of housing support.

An amendment to [*homelessness*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homelessness) laws on Wednesday states the six-week limit homeless families can spend in B&B accommodation will no longer apply to refugees who have fled from Ukraine and Afghanistan.

The changes also set out that councils can place these groups out of area - potentially hundreds of miles away - without taking into account factors such as the disruption to employment and education and access to medical facilities or other support.

An explanatory memorandum on the law changes, prepared by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), states that they are designed to "help local authorities manage an increase in homelessness pressures as a result of two new humanitarian crises".

But housing charity Shelter has warned the move "crosses a red line" by "taking away the hard-won rights" of some homeless people, as well as creating a "two-tier system that singles out refugees and strips away their homeless rights".

The Independent 's [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome) campaign has called on the UK government to do more to help those escaping danger in Afghanistan and the Ukraine.

A survey of councils by the Local Government Association at the beginning of April revealed that 144 Ukrainian households had presented as homeless across 190 local authorities since the start of the war. The figure is believed to have increased significantly since then but the government would not give a figure.

The government has since carried out its own survey on the number of Ukrainian families who have registered as homeless, but it is refusing to publish the resulting data.

Under homelessness laws, it is illegal for local authorities to place families and pregnant women in B&Bs unless there is no other housing available, and in those cases, it must be for a maximum of six weeks.

They also stipulate that before a homeless family is placed out of area the local council must consider a number of factors, including the significance of any disruption to employment or education and proximity to and accessibility of medical facilities.

But the changes mean those rules will no longer apply to anyone who arrived in the UK in the past two years and who has not had settled accommodation in the UK in the three years prior to their arrival. The new regulations are directed primarily at Ukrainian and Afghan refugee households.

The explanatory note states: "These regulations will mean that local authorities will be able to house those who have recently arrived in the UK in B&B accommodation for more than six weeks.

"In addition, it will mean that for newly arrived households, local authorities will not be required to consider most factors before placing a household out of area (apart from caring responsibilities in respect of family associations), reducing the burden on local authorities facing the greatest pressures and who are most likely to need to place households out of area."

Official data shows 46,100 people who have fled the Russian invasion have so far come to the UK under its two designated visa schemes -Homes for Ukraine, whereby they can join hosts in the UK, and the Ukraine Family scheme, under which they can join relatives.

However, a considerable number of these families have been forced to register as homeless with local authorities after their placements have[*broken down*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-sponsorship-hosts-councils-uk-b2068498.html) or have been[*overcrowded*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-families-home-office-uk-refugees-b2067805.html).

Meanwhile, around 12,000 Afghans who were evacuated to the UK in August following the Taliban takeover, or have been transferred since, are still in hotels waiting for appropriate housing. The Independent understands they will soon be forced to leave the hotels.

The document states the changes, which will come into effect on 1 June 2022 and will be reviewed a year later, are "appropriate and proportionate".

Polly Neate, chief executive of Shelter, told The Independent: "The government has crossed a red line by taking away the hard-won rights of some homeless people. It is appalling to set up a two-tier system that singles out refugees and strips away their homeless rights.

"Allowing councils to accommodate homeless refugees literally anywhere, with no way challenge where they are sent, is callous and cruel."

She called on ministers to withdraw the "damaging" regulations, adding: "We are talking about people who've fled conflict or persecution, and gone through the strain of homelessness, only to be sent miles away from the place they've started to settle.

"This could mean children who've been finding their feet at school and making new friends will have to begin all over again - many of whom are recovering from extreme trauma."

Clive Betts, Labour MP and chair of the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee, said the changes were the "completely wrong answer" to the Ukrainian refugee homelessness crisis. He said ministers should instead focus on allowing those whose family scheme placements have broken down to move in with UK residents who are willing to sponsor refugees.

"People have been through trauma and horrors we can't begin to imagine. What they want is to settle down in a nice homely environment, and they're going to stick them in B&Bs for an indefinite amount of time. This cannot be right," the MP added.

A DLUHC spokesperson said: "These temporary changes will only be used as a last resort and will ensure families are not without a roof over their heads. Councils will have to exhaust all other options before placing families in B&B accommodation."

**Load-Date:** May 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Police look into pro-Russian graffiti at Game of Thrones site*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6598-DXT1-JBNF-W50M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 24, 2022 Sunday 9:19 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 333 words

**Byline:** Rebecca Black

**Highlight:** The words 'Z glory to Russia' appeared at the Dark Hedges in Co Antrim.

**Body**

[*Police*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/police) in [*Northern Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/northern-ireland) are making enquiries following the daubing of pro-Russian graffiti at a Game of Thrones filming location.

The graffiti - 'Z glory to Russia' - written in the large words and referring to the symbol Z painted on Russian tanks during the [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) invasion, appeared on the road at the Dark Hedges in Co Antrim.

The tree-lined route became world famous when it was featured in the HBO fantasy series and now attracts significant numbers of tourists.

The [*Police Service of Northern Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/police-service-northern-ireland) confirmed they have received a report that graffiti had been daubed on a tunnel at the Dark Hedges in the Bregagh Road area of Armoy.

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** welcomed to Ballymoney despite graffiti [*https://t.co/kNsHqX3wkn*](https://t.co/kNsHqX3wkn) via [*@duponline*](https://twitter.com/duponline?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Mervyn Storey [*@J\_Donaldson\_MP*](https://twitter.com/J_Donaldson_MP?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) - DUP (@duponline) [*April 23, 2022*](https://twitter.com/duponline/status/1517919425441288192?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

A spokesperson said: "Enquiries are ongoing."

The incident comes as a number of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the Russian invasion of their country started to arrive in Northern Ireland.

[*DUP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dup) North Antrim Assembly Candidate Mervyn Storey said the sentiment of the graffiti is completely at odds with the welcome that arriving ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have received to the area.

"This is a wanton act of vandalism at one of Northern Ireland's most iconic locations," he said.

"It is completely at odds with the warm welcome our local community provides to tourists from all over the world who come to see what the Dark Hedges and the North Coast have to offer."

Mr Storey said he has recently been able to welcome refugees from Ukraine into his church community.

"It is despicable that they should have to encounter this type of behaviour glorifying Russia's oppressive campaign of terror in their homeland.

"Our support must be with the people of Ukraine," he said.

"I will be working closely with local authorities and the PSNI to ensure this graffiti is removed immediately and those responsible held to account."

The Police Service of Northern Ireland have been contacted for a response

**Load-Date:** April 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UK Government response to Ukrainian refugee crisis 'falls well short', says Long*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6528-JVS1-JBNF-W3NS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 22, 2022 Tuesday 6:45 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 464 words

**Byline:** Jonathan McCambridge

**Highlight:** The justice minister also said there is no evidence of human trafficking into Northern Ireland as a result of the conflict.

**Body**

[*UK Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk-government) action to accept ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** "falls well short of what we would all have wanted to see", justice minister [*Naomi Long*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/naomi-long) has told MLAs.

She also said there is no evidence of human trafficking into [*Northern Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/northern-ireland) as a result of the Ukrainian conflict, but the [*PSNI*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/psni) would continue to monitor the risk.

During ministerial question time, [*SDLP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sdlp) MLA Cara Hunter said the "lack of support" for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** from the British Government was "cruel and callous".

I do believe that the efforts which have been made by Government fall well short of what we would all have wanted to see

Mrs Long said immigration was a reserved matter at Westminster.

She added: "I do believe that the efforts which have been made by Government fall well short of what we would all have wanted to see.

"Whilst I welcome the ability to be able to register our homes online if we are willing to receive refugees, the inability for us to be able, even as an Executive, to be a super-sponsor in this case that would allow us to match refugees with homes, I think, is a barrier to us being able to provide the kind of care that the people of Northern Ireland would wish to do so."

Last week the Government announced more than 6,000 people from Northern Ireland had expressed an interest in offering their home to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Sponsors in Northern Ireland will be entitled to claim £350 a month like the rest of the UK.

Mrs Long said: "It is telling that 6,000 people have registered their homes and yet there is no official reception scheme here in Northern Ireland that would allow us to make use of that."

Asked about the potential of criminal gangs exploiting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, Mrs Long said: "To date there is no evidence of human trafficking or exploitation in Northern Ireland as a result of the Ukraine crisis.

There is a real risk that criminals and organised crime gangs will seek to take advantage of the vulnerability of those fleeing the conflict

Naomi Long

"The PSNI is liaising with Home Office immigration enforcement officials and An Garda Siochana, and while there will be refugees who may enter Northern Ireland, none of these have sought to enter the national referral mechanism to date.

"Criminals seek to exploit any issue where they see a benefit to them, they do not care about people or their rights, they seek only to line their own pockets.

"There is a real risk that criminals and organised crime gangs will seek to take advantage of the vulnerability of those fleeing the conflict.

"We will do all we can to assess and monitor the risk and ensure we are working collectively with our partners on the organised crime taskforce and the modern slavery and human trafficking sub group to ensure that we are alert to the risks and to seek to prevent any further exploitation."

**Load-Date:** March 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Prue Leith: Ukraine refugee hosts will give up if they don't hear news soon*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:656P-90X1-DY4H-K1WN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 12, 2022 Tuesday 8:46 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 484 words

**Byline:** Aine Fo

**Highlight:** The Great British Bake Off judge said she is 'ready and willing to take in ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***' but asks 'where are they?'

**Body**

Potential hosts for refugees from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) will "give up" unless they are contacted by officials soon about their offers to help, Dame [*Prue Leith*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prue-leith) has said.

The Great British Bake Off judge said she registered her willingness to take in those in need last month under the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) scheme, but has heard nothing since.

The [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine scheme launched on March 14, with the aim of allowing individuals, charities, community groups and businesses to bring Ukrainians, including those with no family ties to the UK, to safety.

We're ready and willing to take in ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** -so where are they?

Dame Prue Leith

About 12,000 people had arrived in the UK under Ukraine visa schemes as of Tuesday April 5, according to Home Office figures.

Some 10,800 people had arrived under the Ukraine family scheme but only 1,200 had made it to the UK as part of the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme, provisional data published on the department's website showed.

Writing in the Daily Telegraph, Dame Prue said: "We're ready and willing to take in ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** - so where are they?

"We have a log cabin with two bedrooms, underfloor heating - and all mod cons. We registered our willingness to take refugees the day after the website for the Government scheme first went live.

"That was in March. Weeks ago. Since then, apart from an automated acknowledgement, we've heard nothing from government or council. No-one has quizzed us about our (or the cabin's) suitability, or shown any signs of matching us with any Ukrainians. Instead we've been bombarded with screeds of guff about how well the system is working, and appeals for money from refugee charities."

The Homes for Ukraine scheme is now open for visa applications.This scheme is for people fleeing Ukraine who have a sponsor in the UK willing to provide them with a home. See the full guidance for sponsors and applicants & apply online [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) - Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (@luhc) [*March 21, 2022*](https://twitter.com/luhc/status/1505818806450638858?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

She said there "must be thousands of would-be hosts like us", adding: "And some will just give a sigh of relief and give up. To have a stranger living with you is a big risk, and I'd have thought we'd be encouraged - or at least kept in the loop."

She said she and others in her neighbourhood have been thinking about what help they can give, including English lessons, playgroups and parents' coffee mornings, to help people settle in.

But Dame Prue added: "But all our enthusiasm will fade if the powers that be don't tell us what is going on - if anything."

On Friday, Home Secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) apologised "with frustration" after coming under fire over "delays" in the time it is taking for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to arrive in the UK.

But she denied visa requirements and checks are slowing the process and causing delays, insisting the UK will "absolutely see changes in numbers" as work continues.

**Load-Date:** April 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: Donating clothes and food isn't the best way to support Ukrainian refugees - here's why*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XM-CRX1-JBNF-W00D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 5, 2022 Saturday 2:06 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:3

**Length:** 835 words

**Byline:** Paul Hutchings

**Highlight:** Refugees Welcome: Traditional aid can create an infrastructure bottleneck that seriously hampers relief efforts, but donating money to trusted organisations can help deliver what's really needed on the ground

**Body**

When we see the images and videos coming out of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , it's hard not to want to help as hundreds of thousands of [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) , mainly women and [*children*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/children) , flee for their lives. But charity professionals know all too well that, in many instances, good deeds often lead to bad outcomes.

A stark example of this was the aftermath of the [*Haiti*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/haiti) earthquake of 2010. [*Aid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/aid) flooded in from all over the world and created an infrastructure bottleneck that seriously hampered relief efforts, costing countless lives.

Yet sadly, the worst was yet to come. An outbreak of cholera, which was probably introduced by United Nations peacekeepers, killed thousands more Haitian earthquake survivors, at the rate of up to 50 people a day. We must not make the same mistake with the Ukrainian refugee crisis.

Many professional responders now adhere to the doctrine of effective altruism. This is an international movement which seeks to make aid and humanitarian relief more effective, in terms of both what is delivered and how many people in need of humanitarian assistance are reached.

[*Refugee Support Europe*](https://www.refugeesupporteu.com/) has adopted this initiative, and over many years working as a specialist refugee support charity it has built up the necessary knowledge, infrastructure and skill sets to deliver the required humanitarian assistance to refugees.

The Independent has set up a petition calling on the UK government to be at the forefront of the international community offering aid and support to those in Ukraine. To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees)

Now, our expertise is needed like never before, as Europe faces an unprecedented exodus of millions of people. The UN refugee agency says that more than a million people have fled Ukraine since the war began, with millions more on the move. We're initially sending in a team of our most highly experienced people to Romania and Moldova, two countries that have not yet seen the same level of humanitarian support as Ukraine's other neighbours, such as Poland.

So where does this leave us as a humanitarian organisation - and, more to the point, how can we work with people who want to help but are unsure about how to do the right thing? Well, despite their incredibly good intentions, I'd advise people to avoid donating food and second-hand clothes. The TV news footage of communities coming together in village halls and school gyms to sort out tins of food and blankets may give all of us a warm, fuzzy feeling inside, but when it comes to actually organising that aid, the reality can be very different.

All too often, these items may not be what is actually needed. What's more, they're costly to transport abroad and they soak up too many hours of human effort to sort and package. With this in mind, it's far better to donate to a trusted organisation on the ground. This enables charities to buy what's needed locally, and in doing so to support local economies, which are often heavily affected by having to accommodate large influxes of refugees.

The Independent is also raising money for the people of Ukraine - if you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gofundme.com%2Frefugeeswelcome&data=04%7C01%7CHarriet.Williamson%40independent.co.uk%7C44b46804ea604841cd8a08d9fc33883c%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637818120540721828%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=eIuPvSUVu16nwyFqm%2BExECywIKuWnKuJW5aDKI5qYSA%3D&reserved=0) for our GoFundMe page

It also helps charities to be agile so that they can respond to specific needs as and when they arise, be it the right food, clothing, toiletries, medicines or other life essentials. In other words, financial donations enable us to provide what is actually needed, but, just as crucially, when it's needed. Shipments of items from countries hundreds of miles away seldom contain what is required.

We know this approach works. We've applied it for over seven years in refugee camps in Greece, harbouring refugees fleeing the war in Syria, as well as in Bangladesh and Mexico. We've also pioneered our Aid With Dignity approach, which recognises that being a refugee strips you of all human dignity, and as a result how we operate and deal with people is driven by trying to restore that sense of self-worth and mutual respect as much as possible.

This is why we support The Independent's Refugees Welcome campaign, as we value the safety and dignity of refugees first and foremost.

When it comes to doing the right thing in a humanitarian crisis, good intentions are one thing, but delivering good outcomes is something else entirely. Sometimes, how you do aid is just as important as the aid itself.

Paul Hutchings is the co-founder and CEO of Refugee Support Europe

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Ftopic%2Frefugees-welcome-0&data=04%7C01%7CHarriet.Williamson%40independent.co.uk%7C44b46804ea604841cd8a08d9fc33883c%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637818120540878043%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=fxFRbHYzF8K9%2F9swnZLj2eNWpWFo2siaK1gVBLG9e24%3D&reserved=0)

**Load-Date:** March 5, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Fact check: ONS projections show 10.3 million migrants could come to UK by 2036*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C62-X911-JBNF-W01J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 5, 2024 Wednesday 5:26 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 397 words

**Byline:** Stephen Wood

**Highlight:** Potential figure of 13.7 million migrants was estimated over a longer period than suggested.

**Body**

In a social media advert posted to X and [*Facebook*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/facebook) , [*Reform UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/reform-uk) shared an image headlined “Immigration isn’t working” which cited the [*Office for National Statistics*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/office-for-national-statistics) as it claimed: “14 million will arrive in the next 12 years.”

Evaluation

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimates that 10.3 million people will immigrate to the UK in the next 12 years.

The 13.7 million figure of long-term immigration covered a 15-year period between mid-2021 and mid-2036. By the time of the election campaign, three years of immigration has already passed and the remaining total for the next 12 years is 10.3 million.

The facts

The [*ONS*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ons) regularly publishes a National Population Projection, to give those planning public policy an idea of the “potential future size” of the UK population.

As part of these calculations, it also cautions that the numbers “are not forecasts and do not attempt to predict potential changes in international migration”.

The latest projection, published in January 2024, estimates the UK population will grow by 6.6 million between mid-2021 and mid-2036.

Around 500,000 of this will come from a disparity between births and deaths (10.8 million and 10.3 million, respectively).

The remaining population growth of 6.1 million comes from the difference between 13.7 million people immigrating to the UK long-term and 7.6 million people emigrating out of the UK long-term.

The ONS breaks down these figures in its principal projection dataset, showing that over the next 12 years (from mid-2024 to mid-2036), the actual projected level of international migration inflows is 10,347,000.

It assumes a net migration figure of 315,000 each year from 2028 onwards, made up of 827,000 immigrants and 512,000 emigrants.

This follows the current period of high immigration, with a net figure of 672,000 in the year ending June 2023, driven by factors such as housing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, and migrants on health and care work visas.

Reform UK has been contacted for comment.

Links

Original post on X (archived)

Original post on Facebook (archived)

ONS: National population projections: 2021-based interim (archived)

ONS: Principal projection 2021-interim dataset [XLSX file] (archived)

ONS: Long-term international migration, provisional: year ending June 2023 (archived)

**Load-Date:** June 5, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Emhoff visits synagogue, Holocaust memorial in Berlin*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67FF-2351-DY4H-K3KT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

January 31, 2023 Tuesday 4:33 PM GMT

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**Length:** 251 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Doug Emhoff, the husband of U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris, has met ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** at a Berlin synagogue and visited the city’s Holocaust memorial as he wraps up a tour of Poland and Germany focused on Holocaust remembrance and combating rising antisemitism

**Body**

[*Doug Emhoff*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/doug-emhoff) , the husband of U.S. Vice President [*Kamala Harris*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kamala-harris) , met with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** at a [*Berlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/berlin) synagogue and visited the city's Holocaust memorial on Tuesday as he wrapped up a tour of Poland and Germany focused on Holocaust remembrance and combating rising antisemitism.

Emhoff took part in a roundtable event with Jewish, Muslim and Christian leaders on interfaith dialogue. He then visited Berlin's New Synagogue, with a golden dome topped by a Star of David, which was badly damaged in the 1938 Nazi pogrom against Jews and then largely destroyed during World War II.

He met with refugees from Ukraine during his visit to the synagogue, which reopened in the 1990s after partial reconstruction.

The second gentleman later visited Berlin's memorial to the 6 million Jews killed in the Holocaust, a field of 2,700 gray concrete slabs near the landmark [*Brandenburg Gate*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brandenburg-gate) that opened in 2005. He also was visiting other memorials to those murdered and persecuted under the Nazis — Sinti and Roma, gay people and people with physical and mental disabilities.

Emhoff is the first Jewish spouse of either a U.S. president or vice president. His six-day tour of Poland and Germany is meant to further the Biden administration’s work combating antisemitism and to deepen ties with U.S. partners.

He visited the former Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp on Friday, and joined commemorations of the 78th anniversary of the liberation of the camp. He said that he was deeply moved by that “solemn and sad” visit.

**Load-Date:** January 31, 2023

**End of Document**



[*No 10 looking at mansions and Chelsea FC hotel as options to house refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650J-98R1-DY4H-K0JB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 3:03 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 484 words

**Byline:** Geraldine Scott

**Highlight:** Downing Street said that in the first instance visa and sponsorship schemes should be used but ministers were open to all options.

**Body**

The [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) is exploring whether ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** could be housed in the mansions of sanctioned Russian oligarchs, [*Downing Street*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/downing-street) has said.

Ministers have faced calls for the vast houses of those impacted by measures imposed by the [*UK Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk-government) to be turned into homes for those fleeing the war in Ukraine.

On Monday, Downing Street confirmed it was examining whether the properties could be used, although it is thought new legislation would be required.

It was also suggested Chelsea Football Club's hotel could be used after owner [*Roman Abramovich*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/roman-abramovich) was added to the Government's hit list.

Asked about the mansions, the Prime Minister's official spokesman said: "Certainly that's something we are looking at.

"I think in the first instance the two (visa) routes that we have are how we expect people will be housed in the UK, either through family or through this sponsorship route."

Earlier, Sajid Javid said although the mansions should not be the "first place" considered, there was work going on to see if they can be used.

"I think there'll be some legal hurdles to try and do that, but it's right that (Michael Gove) looks broadly to see how we can house more and more ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***."

Downing Street also did not rule out Chelsea Football Club's hotel being used to house ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

The Prime Minister's official spokesman said: "We would certainly want to see wherever is possible (used), we are open to all options.

"There are some challenges around the special licence that has been created in relation to the sanctions."

But "by and large the vast majority of people" coming from Ukraine would be housed under the two routes already announced.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan said it would be a form of "poetic justice" to repurpose the mansions.

He told Times Radio: "I, for some time, with others, have been complaining about those Russian oligarchs close to (Vladimir) Putin, using our city to launder money by buying homes or businesses. And what's doubly heart-breaking about the homes they buy is they're left empty for years. They're not homes, they're gold bricks used to launder money.

"I think the Government should be seizing them, and before selling them - because they'll take some time - they should be using them to house those Ukrainians who are fleeing Ukraine, who we'll be offering a safe haven in London.

"It's a form of poetic justice, but also it's a good use of these many, many empty properties sitting across London simply with dust being gathered inside rather than them being used to house people who need homes."

Squatters have taken over Oleg Deripaska's London mansion, declaring it "belongs to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***".

Asked about the action the Prime Minister's official spokesman said: "Squatting in residential buildings is illegal."

However, he added: "But we are working to identify the appropriate use for seized properties while owners are subject to sanctions."

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Fire destroys refugee shelter for Ukrainians in Germany*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66NF-2591-JBNF-W4GH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

October 20, 2022 Thursday 11:00 AM GMT

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**Length:** 247 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** A German government official has suggested a fire that destroyed a shelter for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** on Germany’s Baltic Coast could have been arson

**Body**

A fire that destroyed a shelter for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** on [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) 's Baltic Coast could have been arson, a top government official suggested Thursday, warning that any kind of violence toward people fleeing war would not be tolerated.

The 14 residents and three employees who lived in the shelter were rescued from the flames when the former hotel in the northeastern state of Mecklenburg-Pomerania burned down Wednesday night, local police said. Nobody was injured, and the refugees were taken to other shelters, according to authorities.

“One thing must be clear to everyone: [*People*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/people) fleeing war need our protection and support. We do not tolerate incitement and violence," the state's governor, Manuela Schwesig, said.

[*Police*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/police) investigating the cause of the fire were looking into possible arson, German news agency dpa reported.

On Monday, police received a report of graffiti depicting a Nazi swastika in the entrance area of the shelter. Whether the graffiti was connected to the fire is not yet known, police said.

More than 1 million refugees from Ukraine, most of them women and children, went to Germany seeking protection since [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) invaded their country almost eight months ago.

The refugees initially were welcomed with warmth, and many German families opened their homes to shelter them. However, a vocal minority has expressed hostility toward them and other foreigners arriving in the country.

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Follow all [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) stories on migration at [*https://apnews.com/hub/migration*](https://apnews.com/hub/migration)

**Load-Date:** October 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'Left a little bit to be desired': AOC calls out what more Biden could have said in State of the Union*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X1-5G81-JBNF-W4PR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 2, 2022 Wednesday 4:32 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 485 words

**Byline:** Gustaf Kilander

**Highlight:** 'The way that the world treated Syrian refugees versus how the world is greeting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** is a very stark contrast'

**Body**

Progressive US Rep [*Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/alexandria-ocasio-cortez) has said that President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) 's State of the Union speech "left a little to be desired", adding that the president didn't push hard enough to reduce [*student loan debt*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/student-loan-debt) and that he came up short on issues such as immigration and [*energy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/energy).

"The piece on immigration was really just glossed over and we have over 10 - you know, anywhere between 10 to 13 million immigrants in this country that feel desperate for a path to citizenship," Ms Ocasio-Cortez told MSNBC after the speech.

"We heard, you know, some speaking to [*Dreamers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dreamers) but Dreamers want their families to be able to stay. They don't want to be separated from their parents either," the New York representative added.

"So I think there's some themes that are, left a little bit to be desired for key constituencies in the Democratic base, but the president's goal was very clear on really projecting a theme of unity and I think he stuck to that," she said.

The 32-year-old criticised Mr Biden for releasing oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve in reaction to [*Russia's*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and for not focusing enough on renewable energy.

She said it "definitely was a lost opportunity" to not push harder to leave the use of oil behind.

"Russia is very, very much reliant on the rest of the world buying its oil. We are releasing oil reserves right now in order to ease that, but we shouldn't be relying on fossil fuels to begin with and that would really solve a lot of these issues," she said. "I think that there's a lot more to be desired there."

She added that electric vehicles "are great" but that "they are not the main form of transit for millions of people who live in urban or urban-adjacent areas in the United States. And so we need to hear more about our transition to clean energy beyond just, you know, weatherizing our windows, which is incredibly important, and EVs".

"But we really need to hear more, I think, about mass transit, trains, high-speed rail and renewable energy," Ms Ocasio-Cortez said.

She also pushed for the president to provide Temporary Protected Status to Ukrainians living in the US, which would allow them to stay in the country legally.

"First and foremost, I think the world is watching, and many immigrants and refugees are watching," she said. "How the world treats ... ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** should be how we are treating all refugees in the United States."

"The way that the world treated Syrian refugees versus how the world is greeting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** is a very stark contrast," Ms Ocasio-Cortez added. "The way that we are looking at immediate granting of [Temporary Protected Status] to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, which is what we need to be doing ... is something that we really need to keep in mind."

She said that when the US speaks about "accepting refugees", the country needs to ensure that "we are meaning it for everybody, no matter where you come from".

**Load-Date:** March 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*William thanks British troops for ‘defending our freedoms’ on trip to Poland*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67V3-RRN1-DY4H-K107-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 22, 2023 Wednesday 5:00 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 586 words

**Byline:** Ted Hennessey

**Highlight:** The Prince of Wales met soldiers based an hour’s drive from the Ukrainian border.

**Body**

The [*Prince of Wales*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-of-wales) has thanked [*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) troops based roughly an hour’s drive from the Ukrainian border for “defending our freedoms” as he kicked off a surprise trip to [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland).

William told soldiers at an air defence military base in the south-eastern [*Polish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/polish) city of Rzeszow that their work to keep “an eye on” the situation in Ukraine is “really important”.

After arriving at the base on Wednesday afternoon, the prince, dressed casually in a black puffer jacket and trousers, was shown a missile launcher.

William said the two-day trip will allow him to personally thank troops and pay tribute to the “inspiring humanity of the Polish people” aiding ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

You’re doing a really important job out here and defending our freedoms is really important, and everyone back home thoroughly supports you

William, speaking to British troops in Poland

Speaking to the soldiers, he said: “I just wanted to come here in person to say thank you for all that you’re doing, keeping everyone safe out here and keeping an eye on what’s going on.

“So, just a big thank you for what you do on a day-to-day basis.”

He added: “You’re doing a really important job out here and defending our freedoms is really important, and everyone back home thoroughly supports you.”

The base, made up of a coalition of British, Polish and US troops, is helping to aid support to Ukraine.

Major Richard Kaye, who met the prince, said: “We’re here to protect critical national infrastructure in the region.

“We’re absolutely privileged to host His Royal Highness The Prince Of Wales and privileged that he’s chosen to come and visit us.”

William also visited Polish soldiers at the 3rd Brigade Territorial Defence Force base in Rzeszow.

He will later travel to an accommodation centre in Warsaw to meet with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have fled and found sanctuary in the Polish capital.

Landing in Warsaw, the prince said: “It’s fantastic to be back in Poland.

“Our nations have strong ties. Through our co-operation in support of the people of Ukraine and their freedom, which are also our freedoms and yours, these ties are further strengthened.

“I’m here because I want to personally thank the Polish and British troops working in close and crucial partnership.

“I also want to pay tribute to the inspiring humanity of the Polish people. You have opened your hearts as much as your homes.

“That’s why this afternoon I visited Rzeszow to meet troops based there to hear their stories and recognise their duty.

“I was struck by their passion as well as their shared determination to defend our shared freedoms.”

The accommodation centre houses about 300 women and children who have arrived in the country recently, providing residents with two meals per day and offers Polish language lessons, employment support, a children’s play area, psychological support and kickboxing classes.

William will hear from residents about their experiences before meeting volunteers.

He spoke of wanting to “underline” his continued support and gratitude to the Polish people.

On Thursday, the prince will meet Polish President [*Andrzej Duda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/andrzej-duda) at the Presidential Palace and visit a local food hall to speak with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

He will also lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, a monument dedicated to Polish soldiers who lost their lives in conflict.

The late Queen Elizabeth II and the late Duke of Edinburgh laid a wreath during their state visit to Poland in 1996.

It is William’s first trip to Poland since he visited in 2017 with his wife the Princess of Wales.

**Load-Date:** March 22, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Payments to Britons hosting Ukraine refugees ‘should double’ amid cost-of-living crisis*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6670-YVT1-DY4H-K500-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 22, 2022 Monday 11:45 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 816 words

**Byline:** Jemma Crew

**Highlight:** Refugees minister Lord Richard Harrington said he has been lobbying the Treasury ‘very hard’ to double the £350-a-month ‘thank you’ payment.

**Body**

Monthly payments to sponsors of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** should double to help them carry on hosting for longer than six months while the cost of living spirals, the minister responsible has said.

Around 25,000 offers of accommodation from hosts under the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine scheme have been taken up so far, with an average of three Ukrainians living in each home, [*Lord*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lord) [*Richard Harrington*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/richard-harrington) said.

Six months on from the start of the Russian invasion, the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) is asking existing hosts to extend their generosity and appealing for new sponsors to step forward.

It comes amid a deepening cost-of-living crisis, with energy bills expected to soar by 80% going into winter, rocketing inflation and rising interest rates.

Are you hosting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and struggling to meet the costs? If so email [*holly.bancroft@independent.co.uk*](mailto:holly.bancroft@independent.co.uk)

Councils have also warned that homelessness could rise if initial six-month placements with hosts end without other options in place.

Lord Harrington said he has been lobbying the Treasury “very hard” to double the £350-a-month “thank you” payment for sponsors who house refugees for longer than half a year – the minimum period expected of hosts.

He said: “The costs… they’re paying maybe a big chunk of rent themselves, the mortgage payments have gone up and everything, and I think it’s perfectly reasonable, in my view, to increase the amount that we’re paying them.”

Wednesday marks six months since the start of the war in Ukraine.

More than 115,000 Ukrainians have arrived in the UK under its visa schemes, according to latest Government figures, including around 81,700 refugees under the sponsorship scheme.

Around 4-5,000 people are arriving each week, Lord Harrington said.

He said the Government has emailed everyone who initially expressed an interest in the sponsorship scheme, to see if they are still interested in taking part if they are not already hosting.

I can argue to the Treasury -it's my job to say: ‘Well, you actually save money, because people then are not becoming homeless’Lord HarringtonHe expects roughly 50,000 of the 200,000-plus people who registered their interest initially will go on to be hosts.In particular, the Government wants to recruit extra hosts in areas close to where refugees are currently being sponsored.This would mean refugees are matched with new hosts nearby so they do not need to leave communities where they have started putting down roots.“I’m not worried about the shortage of offers; I’m more concerned that they’re in the right area,” he added. Lord Harrington said his priority is to stop people becoming homeless, and he is hoping to achieve that by encouraging hosts to continue for longer with existing placements, recruiting new sponsors, and enabling refugees to move into the private rented sector.So far, more than 1,300 Ukrainian single households and families have been assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness as of July 29.He said he has met with groups representing landlords to ask if they will waive reference requirements for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.He added that some councils have said they will act as guarantors for those wanting to rent homes, which he is trying to expand. Lord Harrington said: “I suspect some of them will need an extra budget to do it, but again, I can argue to the Treasury – it’s my job to say: ‘Well, you actually save money, because people then are not becoming homeless’.”The minister is also asking for extra funding money for [*English*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/english) language lessons, which he said are the “key to employment”.The amount being requested is in the “low tens of millions”, he said, adding: “It’s critical. We will get that money back because people get into employment”.The Treasury said the monthly thank you payments for hosts are to “recognise their generosity”, and do not affect benefit entitlement nor council tax status.A spokeswoman said: “We have already acted to make sure these payments are exempt from tax, and continue to monitor and review the support provided under the scheme.”Well done to all those hosting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. We understand that hosting is both brilliant and challenging. Catch up on a special event we put on a few weeks ago to help you keep going. [*https://t.co/QKzFQQMwIm*](https://t.co/QKzFQQMwIm) — Sanctuary Foundation (@SanctuaryFd) [*August 16, 2022*](https://twitter.com/SanctuaryFd/status/1559486309483397121?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

The Sanctuary Foundation, a charity which is helping support ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and sponsors, is launching a campaign – Not Too Late To Host – with the matching service Opora to encourage more people to become sponsors.

Sanctuary Foundation director Dr Krish Kandiah said the need for hosts is “even more desperate” now.

He said: “War has spread across the country over the past six months and lives have been torn apart.

“Neighbouring countries are struggling to cope. This is why we are urging more British people to welcome Ukrainians into their homes.”

**Load-Date:** August 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Prince William thanks British troops for ‘defending freedom’ on surprise trip to Poland*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67V3-RRN1-DY4H-K10T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 22, 2023 Wednesday 5:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** ROYAL FAMILY,LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 592 words

**Byline:** Ted Hennessey

**Highlight:** The Prince of Wales met soldiers based an hour’s drive from the Ukrainian border

**Body**

The [*Prince of Wales*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-of-wales) has thanked [*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) troops based an hour’s drive from the Ukrainian border for “defending our freedoms” as he kicked off a surprise trip to [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland).

William told soldiers at an air defence military base in the south-eastern [*Polish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/polish) city of Rzeszow that their work to keep “an eye on” the situation in Ukraine is “really important”.

After arriving at the base on Wednesday afternoon, the prince, dressed casually in a black puffer jacket and trousers, was shown a missile launcher.

William said the two-day trip will allow him to personally thank troops and pay tribute to the “inspiring humanity of the Polish people” aiding ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Speaking to the soldiers, he said: “I just wanted to come here in person to say thank you for all that you’re doing, keeping everyone safe out here and keeping an eye on what’s going on.

“So, just a big thank you for what you do on a day-to-day basis.”

He added: “You’re doing a really important job out here and defending our freedoms is really important, and everyone back home thoroughly supports you.”

The base, made up of a coalition of British, Polish and US troops, is helping to aid support to Ukraine.

Major Richard Kaye, who met the prince, said: “We’re here to protect critical national infrastructure in the region.

“We’re absolutely privileged to host His Royal Highness The Prince Of Wales and privileged that he’s chosen to come and visit us.”

William also visited Polish soldiers at the 3rd Brigade Territorial Defence Force base in Rzeszow.

You’re doing a really important job out here and defending our freedoms is really important, and everyone back home thoroughly supports you

William, speaking to British troops in Poland

He will later travel to an accommodation centre in Warsaw to meet with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have fled and found sanctuary in the Polish capital.

Landing in Warsaw, the prince said: “It’s fantastic to be back in Poland.

“Our nations have strong ties. Through our co-operation in support of the people of Ukraine and their freedom, which are also our freedoms and yours, these ties are further strengthened.

“I’m here because I want to personally thank the Polish and British troops working in close and crucial partnership.

“I also want to pay tribute to the inspiring humanity of the Polish people. You have opened your hearts as much as your homes.

“That’s why this afternoon I visited Rzeszow to meet troops based there to hear their stories and recognise their duty.

“I was struck by their passion as well as their shared determination to defend our shared freedoms.”

The accommodation centre houses about 300 women and children who have arrived in the country recently, providing residents with two meals per day and offers Polish language lessons, employment support, a children’s play area, psychological support and kickboxing classes.

William will hear from residents about their experiences before meeting volunteers.

He spoke of wanting to “underline” his continued support and gratitude to the Polish people.

On Thursday, the prince will meet Polish President [*Andrzej Duda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/andrzej-duda) at the Presidential Palace and visit a local food hall to speak with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

He will also lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, a monument dedicated to Polish soldiers who lost their lives in conflict.

The late Queen Elizabeth II and the late Duke of Edinburgh laid a wreath during their state visit to Poland in 1996.

It is William’s first trip to Poland since he visited in 2017 with his wife the Princess of Wales.

**Load-Date:** March 22, 2023

**End of Document**



[*More than 62,000 Ukrainians in Ireland, as ‘extraordinary’ response praised*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66VT-9JJ1-JBNF-W2WN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

November 14, 2022 Monday 4:25 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 739 words

**Byline:** By Grinne N. Aodha

**Highlight:** Irish premier Micheal Martin said that communities which had a higher burden than average would be compensated.

**Body**

There are more than 62,000 Ukrainian nationals living in [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) , according to the latest figures from the Central Statistics Office (CSO).

The figure is based on 62,425 personal public service numbers (PPSNs) issued to Ukrainian nationals from the temporary protection directive.

Ireland’s premier Micheal Martin praised people’s “extraordinary response” in housing Ukrainians fleeing their country since the Russian invasion, and said communities which had housed a high proportion of Ukrainians would be “supported” with new infrastructure.

Of the total living in Ireland, 46,000 have been housed by the state and by citizens, with a further 17,000 in direct provision or in international protection centres.

This compares with about 7,500 asylum seekers who were in direct provision centres last year.

More than 14,000 Ukrainian children are attending [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) primary and secondary schools, with children and teenagers making up 34% of arrivals.

It's our expectation that the vast, vast majority of Ukrainians will go back to the Ukraine in the aftermath of the war

Taoiseach Micheal Martin

Women and men aged 20 and older account for 46% and 20% of arrivals respectively.

Of the total, 8,618 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are enrolled in further education and training courses, with the vast majority enrolled in [*English*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/english) language courses.

As of November, 69% of the arrivals who attended employment support events said English language proficiency was a challenge in securing employment.

Mr Martin said there had been “an extraordinary response” from Ireland to take in ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, but he does have concerns about the possible rise of anti-immigrant sentiment.

“It’s our expectation that the vast, vast majority of Ukrainians will go back to the Ukraine in the aftermath of the war,” the Taoiseach said on RTE Radio.

“That certainly is their intention, I mean, they don’t necessarily want to be here. They’re here because of a terrible immoral war visited upon them by (Russian president Vladimir) Putin.”

We appreciate the efforts that people are making in communities all over the country, it has been very positive

Taoiseach Micheal Martin

“We appreciate the efforts that people are making in communities all over the country, it has been very positive.

“And to that end, we’ve allocated additional funds to communities and we believe also that communities that have a higher burden because perhaps the availability of accommodation facilitated that, that we would support those communities in other ways in terms of their cultural, sporting infrastructure in that community.

“In other words, that in acknowledgement and in recognition of the efforts they have made that we would allocate additional resources in recognition of that.”

He said that Cabinet had acknowledged that there had been “significant responses” in certain communities that needed to be acknowledged.

Ministers have repeatedly warned of the challenge of sourcing accommodation amid Ireland’s years-long housing crisis, and admitted recently that newly arriving ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** may have to sleep on the streets temporarily while accommodation is sourced.

In order to help increase capacity, a refusals policy has been introduced which means refugees who refuse an offer of suitable accommodation will not be offered another option.

The Irish [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) is also doubling the payments for people hosting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to 800 euro a month.

The Government has asked its departments to list public buildings that could be modified as emergency accommodation for any newly arriving Ukrainian nationals.

When asked whether he was worried about the possible rise of anti-immigrant sentiment, Mr Martin said that he would “always be concerned about that potential”.

“I would say to people we do need really to hold our nerve against Putin because this is what Putin wants,” he told RTE Radio.

“This is his calculation, that populations across Europe will start engaging or who will start reacting negatively to their governments, creating political issues.”

He said that the Russian president’s strategy was “to undermine the resolve of European member states to stand with Ukraine”.

He added that there was a need for Europe “to stand up against the idea that a neighbour can invade another country, and because you’re small as a country, you can be taken over and your democracy can be suppressed”.

“In the overall context, I would say it’s been a very strong response by Ireland,” he said.

**Load-Date:** November 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Applications to open for Northern Ireland residents to host Ukrainians*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650H-4M61-DY4H-K340-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 8:50 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 367 words

**Byline:** Rebecca Black

**Highlight:** Households will be offered £350 a month to host Ukrainians refugees fleeing the Russian invasion.

**Body**

Applications are set to open later for [*Northern Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/northern-ireland) residents to host ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

It is part of a UK-wide scheme to receive those fleeing the Russian invasion.

[*Households*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/households) will be offered £350 per month to take part.

The Executive Office has strongly encouraged expressions of interest, and these can be made through an online portal due to open on Monday.

A spokesman said officials are working at pace to be ready to offer sanctuary.

"While not all the details have yet been announced by Westminster, we are working at pace, making preparations so we stand ready to provide sanctuary to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***," the spokesman said.

We will participate fully in this humanitarian effort. Partnership across sectors and wider society will be key to ensuring we can support as many Ukrainian people seeking sanctuary here as possible

Executive Office spokesman

"Mindful of the pressure on social housing stock, officials are also engaging with councils and the voluntary and community sector to find creative ways of bringing suitable accommodation into use and identifying all available capacity."

The spokesman said the department is in close contact with the Home Office and the Department for Levelling Up, [*Communities*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/communities) and [*Housing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/housing) and with colleagues in other jurisdictions.

"We will participate fully in this humanitarian effort. Partnership across sectors and wider society will be key to ensuring we can support as many Ukrainian people seeking sanctuary here as possible."

Concern had been expressed over Northern Ireland's contribution to the Ukraine response in the absence of a First and deputy [*First Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/first-minister) in office to lead the effort.

Paul Givan resigned earlier this year as part of the DUP's action against the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Patrick Corrigan, of Amnesty International, said: "I am concerned that the absence of a First Minister and deputy First Minister, who have lead responsibility for refugee matters, has led to Northern Ireland being left behind when it comes to playing our part in offering a welcome to refugees from Ukraine."

Irish premier Micheal Martin said at the weekend that Ireland has so far accepted 5,500 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, and may take in more than 100,000.

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'My goal was to not die': Ukrainian refugees flee to Hungary as Russia's war worsens*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WT-C1F1-JBNF-W54D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 1, 2022 Tuesday 7:18 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:3

**Length:** 964 words

**Byline:** Borzou Daragahi

**Highlight:** Refugees Welcome: More than 80,000 people have fled from Ukraine to Hungary, where Budapest's Nyugati railway station is serving as a humanitarian relief hub for refugees, reports Borzou Daragahi

**Body**

On the third day[*of the war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-update-today-russia-putin-b2025978.html) , the bombing became overbearing, and Vera Rudova concluded it was time to leave [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) , the city where she had lived her entire life.

"It was my last chance to get out," she said.

The 31-year-old Ukrainian stylist boarded what she said was the final train out of Kyiv and made her way from station to station in the vast Ukrainian countryside, squeezing her way onto trains first toward Lviv and the Polish border, and then toward the Hungarian frontier before she finally arrived in [*Budapest*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/budapest) on Tuesday afternoon.

"My goal was just not to die and be safe," she told The Independent, as she rested outside Budapest's Nyugati station, which has turned into a makeshift humanitarian relief hub for thousands of Ukrainians and others escaping [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's invasion.

The ornate train station, built in the 19th century by the same company that built the Eiffel Tower in Paris and considered an architectural masterpiece, is now the centre of efforts by Hungarian authorities, relief organisations and good samaritans to help at least 80,000 Ukrainian citizens and residents who have fled the conflict.

The government of the controversial prime minister Viktor Orban, who has frequently demonised migrants and [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) from the Middle East, has thrown open its doors to those escaping the [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) war and set up a national helpline to coordinate efforts and direct aid - earning praise even from opponents.

The Independent has set up a petition calling on the UK government to be at the forefront of the international community offering aid and support to those in Ukraine. To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) .

The Independent is also raising money for the people of Ukraine - if you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gofundme.com%2Frefugeeswelcome&data=04%7C01%7CKaty.Clifton%40independent.co.uk%7C2a2d4959602a48a7514408d9fbc3eb4d%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637817641167117856%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=%2FDXULZcjP0zOpL9jB%2FpDx3Z10K6NwyORJy68hlaIVYY%3D&reserved=0) for our GoFundMe page.

"We appreciate what he's doing to help refugees," Peter Marki-Zay, leader of the opposition, said to journalists. Opponents, though, were organising a rally Tuesday to oppose Mr Orban's close association with Russian president Vladimir Putin and muster up donations for refugees.

More than half a million refugees have already fled Ukraine, heading toward Poland, Romania, and Moldova as well as [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) , with the [*UN warning*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-refugees-family-b2025862.html) that the figure could ultimately exceed 4 million and lead to "Europe's largest refugee crisis this century".

Every few hours, trains arriving from eastern Hungary disgorge hundreds of passengers, many of them families with children. Bewildered and exhausted, they are guided into an elegant hall surrounded by statues of Hungarian historical figures and elaborate terracotta trimmings where volunteers offer food, snacks, medicine, toiletries, toys, and information about lodging options.

A pair of women brought homemade sandwiches they had prepared. Another woman brought brownies she'd baked. Several people held up signs offering translation services.

"We are giving out a couple of things, along with a hug if you need," read one sign.

"We need sandwiches more than anything," said Natalie Montanaro, an American living in Hungary who decided to volunteer for the Red Cross effort. "We need water and fruit. We have food, but few ways to package it. "

One volunteer, 27-year-old Viktoria, is a Russian living in Budapest. She came to offer her to translate for the arrivals, many of whom don't speak any other languages but Ukrainian or Russian. She said she was opposed to Vladimir Putin's war, and felt powerless to stop it. "I think it's horrible," she said, "My father wanted to go out and protest, but was afraid he would get fired."

Most of the arrivals are Ukrainians, and many are ethnic Hungarians with strong ties to this country. But there are people from other nations as well, students and labourers from the Middle East, Africa and South Asia who found themselves in Ukraine as the war began.

Even those with means find themselves in a tough situation, in a country they never expected to visit, with few of their belongings and little

"Even if they have money, perhaps they couldn't access it because banks were closed or couldn't exchange it," said Reka Gilizce, a spokesperson for a Protestant charity.

Tomi, a 19,-year-old Nigerian, tried to stay on in the eastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv as long as she could.

But as the bombing intensified, shaking even the subway station where she had been sheltering, she and her friends made a decision to leave Ukraine's second-largest city and one of the main targets of Mr Putin's effort to conquer the country.

They grabbed a few bags and pushed their way onto trains. Plan A was to head to Poland, but they were repeatedly told they would have problems crossing the border.

"We heard they weren't accepting foreigners in Poland, only Ukrainians," she said.

So they decided to make their way toward the Hungarian border. On Monday, she waited 11 hours in the bitter cold before being able to cross the frontier, eventually arriving in Budapest. She grabbed some food and secured a toothbrush and toothpaste. She said she just wanted to find a hotel and take a hot bath, then confer with her family and friends about where to go next.

"After sleeping I will be able to think about my next move," she said.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here.*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Ftopic%2Frefugees-welcome-0&data=04%7C01%7CKaty.Clifton%40independent.co.uk%7C2a2d4959602a48a7514408d9fbc3eb4d%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637817641167117856%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=RZ7crcxX9U9jftiU38S4VVIl8uiLT6BXiwvDblkPG%2Fo%3D&reserved=0)

**Load-Date:** March 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*All you need to know about the scheme for Britons to house Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650K-4KC1-JBNF-W1X7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 8:14 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 1276 words

**Byline:** Benjamin Cooper

**Highlight:** The Homes for Ukraine scheme has been launched with no limit on the number of Ukrainians who can be offered shelter in Britain.

**Body**

A sponsorship scheme has been launched allowing people and organisations to offer Ukrainians fleeing the war a home in the UK.

Communities Secretary [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) set out details of the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine programme in the [*Commons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/commons) on Monday, saying the number of Ukrainians now arriving in the UK is "rapidly increasing" and that the numbers will "grow even faster from tomorrow".

Register your interest in our [*#HomesForUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/HomesForUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) scheme here [*https://t.co/iL1dcrW4uC*](https://t.co/iL1dcrW4uC) [*pic.twitter.com/b1nJ3m2n0S*](https://t.co/b1nJ3m2n0S) - Michael Gove (@michaelgove) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/michaelgove/status/1503402365692616706?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

- What is the scheme?

The Homes for Ukraine programme allows individuals, charities, community groups and businesses to bring people escaping the war to safety - even if they have no ties to the UK.

Anyone with a room or home available can offer it to a Ukrainian individual or a family, though those offering will be vetted and Ukrainian applicants will undergo security checks.

Mr Gove said that initially the scheme will "facilitate sponsorship between people with known connections" so it can be "up and running as soon as possible", but added that it will "rapidly" expand by working with charities, faith and community groups.

Previously only Ukrainians with family members already settled in the UK could come.

- How long can refugees stay with a family or individual?

Members of the public providing accommodation to Ukrainians must do so for at least six months.

Sponsored Ukrainians will be granted three years' leave to remain in the UK, with entitlement to work and access public services.

- What security checks will be carried out?

Mr Gove said the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) wants to "minimise bureaucracy and make the process as straightforward as possible, while also doing everything we can to ensure the safety of all involved".

Sponsors and all adults in their households will need to submit to security checks and possibly also safeguarding checks.

The suitability of the accommodation may also be assessed by their local council.

Ukrainians will be subject to "standard" security checks, according to the website, with biometric checks made after they arrive in the UK to avoid delays.

Mr Gove has said steps will be taken to ensure people who might be "intent on exploitation" are prevented from "abusing" the new scheme.

A spokesperson for the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) said the charity did not want to see "unnecessary barriers" built into the process, but "it is vital child protection is built into every stage of the Government's and local authorities' response to this crisis".

Paul Anticoni, chief executive of World Jewish Relief, said the protection of those who have had to leave their homes - many of whom are women and children - "has to be a priority for any government or agencies that are involved in accommodation".

- Is there any compensation for hosting?

Those offering a place to stay will receive an optional tax-free monthly payment of £350 which will not affect benefit entitlements or council tax status.

The "thank you" payment is limited to one payment per residential address.

Hosts should not charge any rent.

Mr Gove has also said local authority areas will be entitled to more than £10,000 per Ukrainian refugee using the fresh route to the UK.

"Additional payments" will be available to support school-age children who need to be accommodated within the education system, he said.

- Do sponsors provide anything other than accommodation?

Sponsors are not expected to provide meals or cover the costs of food and living expenses for their guests, unless they wish to do so philanthropically.

The Government will provide information to sponsors so that they can point their guests to organisations who can help them access benefits, register with a GP and with school placements.

- Who can be a host?

Sponsors can be of any nationality and any immigration status as long as they have permission to be in the UK for at least six months.

Anyone with a spare room, or separate self-contained accommodation that is unoccupied and available for at least six months can volunteer to help.

- Who can be a guest?

The website says someone is eligible if they are a "Ukrainian national or the immediate family member of a Ukrainian national, and were resident in Ukraine prior to 1 January 2022."

The scheme is open for adults and children within family units.

- How do you apply?

Anyone who already knows a Ukrainian they want to sponsor should get in touch with them and prepare to fill in a visa application. The visa application system will go live on Friday.

Those who do not know someone they want to host can now register their interest on the website homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk.

The Government will work with charities, faith groups and universities to match potential hosts with people from Ukraine.

More detailed guidance for sponsors will become available in the coming days, according to the website.

Anyone registering will receive updates on the security checks, information on the status of the arrangement and the role of the local council in providing wider support.

- How many Ukrainians are expected to be helped through the scheme?

The Government is setting no limit, saying the UK will welcome as many Ukrainians as wish to come and for whom there are sponsors.

Members of the public are being urged to come forward and help if they can.

In less than an hour, 1,500 people had already registered for the scheme, Mr Gove told MPs, adding that he hopes the first Ukrainians to receive support under the project will arrive within a week.

- What has been the response?

Shadow communities secretary [*Lisa Nandy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lisa-nandy) said Labour was relieved to hear Mr Gove would announce the sponsorship scheme after weeks of delay, adding: "A press release is not a plan and we are really deeply concerned about the lack of urgency."

Ms Nandy insisted the visa application process could be simplified, telling Mr Gove: "We could keep essential checks but drop the excessive bureaucracy."

Mr Gove, Transport Secretary Grant Shapps and Academy Award-nominated actor Benedict Cumberbatch are among those who have said they might apply to the scheme, while Boris Johnson and Health Secretary Sajid Javid have indicated they will not.

The Government has faced widespread criticism for its response to the refugee crisis so far, with critics noting that unlike the UK all EU countries have waived visa requirements for Ukrainians in the short term.

The Refugee Council chief executive Enver Solomon told The Guardian the UK scheme was "effectively a managed migration route, which is not suitable to use to respond to a humanitarian crisis".

"This conflict doesn't look like it's going to end quickly. There needs to be a clear pathway to longer-term accommodations," he said.

There have been also concerns about the tight timeframe the Government has provided, with the NSPCC in its statement calling it an "ambitious turnaround".

The charity said it was "essential that the Government works closely with local authorities, the fostering community, charities and other key local partners to ensure this sponsorship scheme is ultimately safe; has appropriate levels of support for traumatised Ukrainian children who have fled bloodshed, and on-going assistance available for their sponsors".

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Billions spent on ‘refugees and migrants’ in UK to be counted as foreign aid*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66TH-GMS1-JBNF-W522-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

November 7, 2022 Monday 2:06 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK NEWS,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:1

**Length:** 526 words

**Byline:** Thomas Kingsley

**Highlight:** Senior Tories could rebel against the move, according to reports

**Body**

Billions of pounds of government spending in Britain is to be counted as foreign aid.

Under Treasury rules, as much as £3.5 billion for refugees and migrants in the [*UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk) will be considered part of Britain’s contribution to international development, The Times reported.

It means the government is in line to spend almost half of the foreign aid budget in Britain, leaving 0.3 per cent of gross national income to go on projects overseas – below the government target of 0.5 per cent.

Conservative MPs warned that ministers would face a backlash from the move. Tobias Ellwood, chairman of the defence select committee, said that the decision would “astonish many colleagues”.

It comes after Save the Children speaking to The Independent warned that[*billions could be slashed from overseas aid projects*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/overseas-aid-truss-ukraine-0-5-b2153445.html) unless ministers abandoned the rule diverting a portion of funds to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the UK.

The UK’s international aid budget is £11.4 billion but under Treasury spending rules the costs of looking after asylum seekers and other refugees in Britain count towards it.

Amid the war in Ukraine and the Channel boats crisis, these costs have risen significantly, meaning that an estimated £3.5 billion will be spent to cover it. About another £1 billion of domestic spending is also classified as “aid” including research grants and scholarships.

According to The Times, Andrew Mitchell, the new international development minister, is lobbying Jeremy Hunt, the chancellor, to protect existing aid spending.

Senior Tories have raised the prospect of rebellion over the inclusion of spending on ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the foreign aid budget. Mr Ellwood said: “There will certainly be noise now that it’s eroded from 0.7 to 0.3. [per cent].”

While chancellor, Rishi Sunak, vowed that the 0.7 per cent aid target would return when the UK wasn’t borrowing for day-to-day spending and its ratio of underlying debt to GDP was fallen, however, with pressures to make spending cuts amid recession warnings, it’s likely the restoration will be pushed back further.

Including those costs within the 0.5 per cent aid budget, which is already fully allocated, will result in further deep cuts in funding for those in the toughest circumstances across the world,” said Richard Watts, senior adviser for development finance.

“This isn’t right. The UK government should ensure its help for refugees here does not come at the expense of support for children across the world at this critical time. It can and must step up, and not back.”

Ministers have [*already ordered a stop to “non-essential” aid spending*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/uk-news/overseas-aid-cuts-treasury-oxfam-b2130769.html) – partly because of the ballooning Ukraine costs – with agencies still in the dark over existing projects, with just four months left in the calendar year.

Sarah Champion, chair of the House of Commons international development committee, said: “It’s absolutely right that we step up to help the people of Ukraine, but we mustn’t abandon our commitment to the world’s poorest in doing so.

“We must show flexibility in increasing the 0.5 per cent target before the costs of providing much-needed help to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** lead to cuts that will cause real suffering elsewhere.”

**Load-Date:** November 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Government to investigate Ukrainian concerns over accommodation centres*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65J4-BJY1-JBNF-W13W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 26, 2022 Thursday 5:07 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 444 words

**Byline:** Cate McCurry

**Highlight:** Leo Varadkar said the issues raised by refugees will be looked into.

**Body**

The [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) is to investigate claims that some ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have raised concerns about being placed in centres with people of Russian ethnicity.

Tanaiste [*Leo Varadkar*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/leo-varadkar) said that while the claims will be examined, he does not have a major concern that pro-Putin agents are arriving in [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) and staying in refugee centres.

Some ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** stay at temporary accommodation centres before moving on to long-term accommodation in different parts of the country.

A spokeswoman for the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) said that where issues arise in accommodation centres, managers deal with those involved on site.

I think as Irish people you can kind of understand that sort of relationship that can exist between two neighbouring countries, often friends, sometimes enemies

Leo Varadkar

It said that when a resolution cannot be reached, the department will "endeavour" to provide alternative accommodation.

Mr Varadkar said the concerns raised by ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** will be looked into.

"I think it's important to appreciate that there are a lot of people who are Ukrainian who have Russian family and vice versa," Mr Varadkar added.

"The countries are not dissimilar to [*England*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/england) and Ireland in many ways. So you do have people that have dual citizenship, and you have people who are Ukrainian but have Russian family members and vice versa.

"I think as Irish people you can kind of understand that sort of relationship that can exist between two neighbouring countries, often friends, sometimes enemies.

"We will look into this but I don't have a major concern that there are pro-Putin or pro-Kremlin Russian agents getting into the country under the guise of being Ukrainian.

"But we do have to bear in mind that that's not impossible, and that's why we will look into it."

A department spokeswoman said it provides short-term accommodation to those who are deemed by the [*Department of Justice*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/department-of-justice) to be eligible for protection under the Temporary Protection Directive.

"The department does not discriminate based on race or nationality," the spokeswoman added.

"When a person has received Beneficiary of Temporary Protection (BOTP) status from the Department of Justice, DCEDIY then provides temporary accommodation according to their particular needs.

"Some BOTPs may be of Russian ethnicity and have been resident in Ukraine prior to the invasion.

"Where issues arise in any of the procured DCEDIY accommodation centres, managers deal with BOTPs onsite and only when a resolution cannot be reached will the department endeavour to provide alternative accommodation.

"The department does not comment on individual cases."

**Load-Date:** May 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Billions spent on ‘refugees and migrants’ in UK to be counted as foreign aid OLD*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66T7-7601-DY4H-K0BF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

November 7, 2022 Monday 2:06 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 526 words

**Byline:** Thomas Kingsley

**Highlight:** Senior Tories could rebel against the move, according to reports

**Body**

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“We must show flexibility in increasing the 0.5 per cent target before the costs of providing much-needed help to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** lead to cuts that will cause real suffering elsewhere.”

**Load-Date:** November 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'Playing with people's lives': refugees face 'chaotic' family visa scheme in UK*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y6-KG01-JCS0-D502-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 8, 2022 Tuesday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 4

**Length:** 1171 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are facing "total chaos" as they try to apply to join relatives in Britain under the Home Office's bespoke visa scheme, as Downing Street contradicted Priti Patel's pledge to expand the route.

Ministers have been accused of "badly letting Ukrainians down" after it emerged that those who have fled the Russian conflict are having to travel for hours and in some cases wait for days before they can make an application to the home secretary's family migration route.

It came after Downing Street dismissed suggestions that Ms Patel was examining options to create a "humanitarian route" - which would offer ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** the right to come to the UK regardless of whether they have family ties - with a spokesman saying this was in fact referring to government schemes that have already been announced.

The Independent's Refugees Welcome campaign is calling on the UK government to set up a resettlement scheme to give Ukrainians fleeing the invasion sanctuary in Britain.

Yesterday evening the Home Office revealed that just 300visashave been granted to Ukrainiansafter the department received thousands of applications for itsUkraineFamily Scheme.

A lack of available appointment slots at UK visa centres in EU countries has meant some refugees are not currently able to apply at all, leaving them having to pay for accommodation or rely on charity in other countries while they could be supported by loved ones in Britain.

According to the Home Office's visa centre website, the majority of visa centres across Europe close before 4pm, with some closing as early as 1pm, and are not open on weekends.

Hundreds of Ukrainians who have arrived in Calais after fleeing from the conflict with the hope of reaching the UK have meanwhile been told they must travel to Paris or Brussels in order to make an application. The centre in Brussels is open on three half-days a week to process applications.

A poster has been put up in a hostel where around 139 Ukrainians - mainly women and children - are said to be staying, states: "No visas delivered in Calais" and orders refugees to fill in a visa form online, then go to UK visa centres in either Paris or Brussels in order to apply for a visa.

Ms Patel told the House of Commons yesterday that the Home Office was setting up a "bespoke VAC [visa application centre] en route to Calais but away from the port because we have to prevent a surge taking place".

But the Home Office has released no further details about this centre, and the poster remained up in the hostel last night.

The home secretary announced a family migration route for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** last week, under which she said tens of thousands of close relatives of British nationals and people settled in the UK would be eligible to come to the UK.

But in order to submit an application refugees are required to attend a UK visa centre, of which there are only one or two in most EU countries, meaning many must travel for several hours to attend one.

There are also issues with capacity, with UK-based family members and immigration lawyers reporting that they have been unable to find a free appointment slot on the website.

Immigration lawyer Jan Doerfel told The Independent he was supporting one Ukrainian family who had been unable to get an appointment at the visa centre in Moldova, which is open Monday to Friday between 9am and 3pm.

"The family has been told that the centre is staffed only by two part-time employees who work three days a week and there are no additional or separate slots for Ukrainian applicants," he said.

Shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper described the situation as "chaotic", saying there was a "huge gap between the rhetoric and the reality" when it came to the visa scheme.

"Please stop claiming this is all world beating and world leading and actually accept that it is not working and things are going wrong," she urged Ms Patel in the House of Commons yesterday.

Lana Bilko, 51, a Ukrainian national settled in London, arrived in Germany on Sunday to meet her elderly mother who fled the Ukraine conflict last week. After submitting her mother's visa application yesterday morning she was told it would take "at least five days" before they got a decision.

She had hoped to be able take her mother back to the UK yesterday evening, given Ms Patel had stated that it would take a matter of hours for visas to be processed.

The Ukrainian national, whose mother is 73, said: "I took time off for today, but now I have to take time off for the whole week. We stayed in a hotel, Euro 90 a night - I can't afford for us to stay the whole week there."

Ms Bilko said of her elderly mother: "She has witnessed war. She is so scared. When she hears a plane passing she starts shaking because of what she witnessed. Ms Patel is playing with people's lives."

Andrew Polakov, 47, a Ukrainian living in Britain who is trying to assist his parents and in-laws to join his family after they fled the country, described the visa process as a "shambles".

The IT worker told The Independent he had been told by a member of staff on the Home Office helpline for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** that he could submit all six relatives' applications on the same online form.

He did this, but when his family members arrived at the visa centre in Chisinau in Moldova, a two-hour drive from where they are currently staying with friends, they were told they each had to submit one separately.

Mr Polakov discovered that there were no appointments available for the following day, so had to rush to fill in the other five forms and re-submit them that same day - which they managed to do. The family has now been told they must wait 48 hours for a response.

"It's ridiculous. It totally contradicts what the Home Office told us. The whole thing doesn't work. It's total chaos," he said.

Nearly 600 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have arrived in Calais over the last week and tried to join their family members in the UK. The prefecture in Calais told The Independent 286 of them have been turned away and told they must travel to other French regions to apply for a visa.

Clare Mosely, founder of charity Care4Calais, which has been providing nappies, sanitary products and other items to the refugees, told The Independent: "There's a real lack of clarity about how it works and what they need to do to apply for a visa. Some of them have been told to go back to Paris, but it's really expensive to live in Paris and stay in hotels in Paris."

It came as French interior minister Gerald Darmanin warned that a failure to process ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***' visas quickly could push some into taking small boats across the English Channel.

It meanwhile emerged that transport operators face fines of up to £2,000 per person if they bring ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** without the right visas to the UK.

A government spokesperson said there continued to be capacity at visa application centres across Europe. They said that along with the family route, the Home Office would soon open an "unlimited sponsorship route" for Ukrainians without family ties here.

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Transport operators face £2,000 fines for bringing Ukrainians without visas to UK*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y7-0N91-JBNF-W4GF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 7:09 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 746 words

**Byline:** Lizzie Dearden

**Highlight:** Firms say they are bound by 1999 law amid reports of families being turned around at French ports

**Body**

Transport operators face fines of up to £2,000 per person if they bring ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) without the right [*visas*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/visas) to the UK, The Independent can reveal as hundreds reach [*Calais*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/calais).

Amid numerous reports of families being turned back from ports in northern [*France*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/france) , firms have told The Independent they are bound by a two-decade old law.

Under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, carriers can be fined £2,000 "for each inadequately documented arrival".

People covered by the laws include those without a visa, or with one that is expired or not yet valid.

A spokesperson for [*Eurotunnel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/eurotunnel) said it was "helping increasing numbers of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to cross the Channel".

"The UK government requires carriers to verify if passengers have the documents necessary to enter the UK before allowing them to board," a statement added.

"To avoid the carrier liability fine, a support centre has been set up in Calais, to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to obtain the correct papers before they cross.

"If someone arrives at our terminal without the papers they need to satisfy UK immigration requirements, with the town of Calais, we facilitate their transport to the support centre and then carry them once their papers are in order."

Eurostar, the separate passenger train service that operates from European cities including Paris to London, said it required ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to have visas in place before tickets are issued.

"There would be no point in passing through the ticket gate without a visa only to be turned away moments later at the border," a spokesperson told The Independent.

Ferry companies, including P&O and Brittany, are subject to the same requirements under the law, as are aircraft operators.

It comes after the French interior minister said that by Saturday, around 400 Ukrainians wanting to reach the UK had arrived in Calais, and at least 150 had been turned back and told to obtain visas at British embassies in Paris or Brussels.

Gerald Darmanin warned that delays and confusion could "push people to take small boats to cross the Channel to England" and urged Britain to set up a processing centre in Calais.

On Monday afternoon, Priti Patel told parliament UK had set up a "bespoke visa application centre en route to Calais but away from the port".

The centre did not appear on the Home Office's website and it was unclear whether it had started operation.

"We have staff in Calais, we have support on the ground, it is wrong to say we are just turning people back, we are not," Ms Patel added.

"It is important we do not create choke points in Calais but encourage a smooth flow of people."

The British government has so far announced two bespoke routes for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** -a family scheme for some relatives of those already settled in the UK, and a separate sponsorship scheme.

Ms Patel told MPs more than 14,000 people have applied to come to the UK via the [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) family scheme visa.

The Home Office has not yet released any update on how many of those applications had been processed, amid reports of slow turnaround times, and the sponsorship scheme has not yet been opened.

Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer said: "The Home Office is in a complete mess about this -they keep changing the rules, the stories of what is actually happening on the ground contradict what the Home Office say.

"They have got to sort this out ... there should be a simple route to sanctuary for those that are fleeing for their lives."

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) said it was offering advice to the government to ensure Ukrainians already in the UK are able to stay legally, and that those with family can enter "in an expedited fashion".

A spokesperson told The Independent other schemes, for Ukrainians without family ties to Britain, should be "as generous as possible as a complement to the EU's Temporary Protection Directive".

The UNHCR is calling for the UK to extend its current measures to allow more Ukrainians already in Britain to extend their visas, and enable all those living lawfully in the UK to sponsor their Ukrainian relatives -rather than those in "limited immigration categories".

The agency said the sponsored humanitarian route announced must be launched as soon as possible, and then be "rapidly scaled up after launch to meet the rapidly growing needs in Eastern Europe".

More than 1.7 million Ukrainians fleeing Russia's invasion have so far crossed into central Europe, according to UN figures, with more than 1 million received by Poland alone since 24 February.

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: I've been trying to secure UK visas for Ukrainian refugees - the red tape is shameful*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YF-SWC1-JBNF-W2KP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 9, 2022 Wednesday 11:03 AM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:1

**Length:** 909 words

**Byline:** Harriet Toner

**Highlight:** Bombs are raining down on Ukraine, and the Home Office can't even manage to process a few forms

**Body**

The news that just 300 visas (out of 17,700 applications started) have been issued by the UK to Ukrainians fleeing war surprised me - but not for the same reason it may have surprised you.

Such a paltry number of visas being issued to people we have pledged to help has, rightfully, been [*met with outrage and disgust*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-office-priti-patel-government-downing-street-boris-johnson-b2030312.html). Some people also seem shocked by the low number of approvals - and I can only assume they are people who have never attempted to navigate the UK visa system.

A few weeks ago, I was one of those people. But for the last 10 days, I have been trying to secure visas for the relatives of a Ukrainian woman in the UK. Her family fled [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) as war broke out, joining hundreds of thousands of people who made for the border, making the heartbreaking decision to leave behind male relatives blocked from leaving the country.

This group of five women and children - aged four and 10 - managed to escape Ukraine and travelled by land as far as Italy, where they are holed up in emergency accommodation waiting for their visas to be processed.

They fled with what they could carry, and have spent the last week sleeping in a monastery-come-shelter, thanks to the generosity of people they have encountered. Others, sadly, have been less generous. One paid accommodation refused to take them because they were fleeing Ukraine, musing that "they might never leave". Another mysteriously became fully booked when we explained the family's situation.

But the family does not need to stay in Italy. They don't speak the language, or have any connections, funds or help. What they do have is a loving family here in the UK, who are desperate to hug them, protect them, and house them - people who can give them real refuge from the horror of losing their homes and the only life they have ever known.

Thanks to the UK's extension of the family migration visa, they are entitled to be here. These are documents Priti Patel promised would see them arriving safely on UK soil, among a select few allowed to enter the country to stay with their relatives. And yet, even this pitiful allowance the UK government has deigned to offer Ukrainians isn't working as it should.

From a shambolic roll-out of new rules, which saw waits of more than 45 minutes on the designated "helpline" only to speak to people who freely [*admitted they had "no idea" what was happening*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-helpline-home-office-refugees-visas-uk-b2026695.html) , to an application website that offered help in many different languages - but not Ukrainian; the entire process was an exercise in futility.

Having to explain to the family that their relatives were stuck, as we made phone call after phone call while they repeated "the UK said they would help us", was devastating. And for what reason? Our system is bureaucratic? We've announced this extension too early and the computer systems haven't caught up?

The family abroad fared little better. Despite having the help of Ukrainian family in the UK, three English-speakers calling various visa centres and the [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) , and a family friend who works in immigration law, they have made scant progress.

Not only were they turned away from one visa centre because "there are no appointments in March" and asked to leave another because they needed to first secure appointments online (of which there are none), they also received conflicting information on the immigration helpline. The bureaucracy they have faced over the past week has been astounding.

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment sign up to our free weekly Voices Dispatches newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

One occasion saw the children and their mother weeping outside the doors of a visa office, as heartless staff inside asked them to leave and refused to help them because "the forms weren't filled out properly". These are people fleeing aerial bombardment - you'd think someone inside the centre would have read the news and could have perhaps offered them some assistance.

One member of the family group has already decided to return to Ukraine, unable to reconcile leaving her adult son behind in a warzone. Disturbingly, the others are now debating whether to turn back, having lost faith that the UK government's offer of help is real, and unwilling to spend months on end forcing their children to sleep on floors.

That this group, after gathering their belongings and packing up their lives, is considering re-entering the country they tried so hard to flee from should make the UK government hang their heads in shame. How can they consider their visa offering fair or generous when people would rather risk their lives than trust the process?

Absolute kudos to the handful of people who managed to wade through the tide of bureaucracy to get their visas approved and issued. I can't believe that many people managed to navigate the system, and wonder how many thousands of others are stuck in cyber limbo, endlessly clicking refresh on a visa appointment page that simply hasn't been updated as they face another night without a home.

The number of issued visas should be a wake-up call for the government, proving that the system is both literally and figuratively broken, and they must act now to change it. Boris Johnson said "the UK will be as generous as we possibly can be", but that simply isn't true. We are not offering nearly enough, and what we are offering isn't working properly.

Bombs are raining down on Ukraine, and we can't even manage to process a few forms.

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: Disband the Home Office - only then can Britain redeem itself from shame over Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YY-2BW1-DY4H-K2GD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 11, 2022 Friday 7:04 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:3

**Length:** 1066 words

**Byline:** Hannah Fearn

**Highlight:** It is the only way to put right the last decade - and respond with humanity to the crisis in Ukraine

**Body**

Sometimes it is the smallest of details inside a news report that tell the bigger story.

Scottish journalist Lindsay Bruce is [*following the case*](https://twitter.com/LLBruce/status/1501322950703734788) of two Ukrainian women in Aberdeen seeking to bring their relatives over to safety, but finding themselves thwarted at every turn by the Orwellian bureaucracy of the [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office). They are trying to complete a complex visa process in a warzone, sleeping with their children in a bomb shelter, only to be told they have to provide photocopied and printed documents for an application.

Where does the UK home office expect refugees fleeing gun fire and bombs to find a printer and photocopier? It's the idiocy - quite apart from the callous immorality - that illuminates how unfit the department has become. It can no longer manage the most basic operations any UK citizen might expect it to: to protect civilians whose lives are at risk in a conflict and offer them refuge.

There's something novelistic about the Sisyphean efforts refugees with the right to enter the UK are having to make to prove themselves. But even worse is the drawbridge that has been pulled over who does - and does not - hold that right.

Of course, the home office is carrying out government instruction in upholding these rules, but it is well positioned to lead a new debate on the rights of refugees - and the UK's ability to offer refuge. It is failing to do that because the culture of the department is so eroded. It is no longer an arbiter of sanctuary and security, but a brutal border force that bullies those who question it.

In the past decade, there have been endless miscarriages of justice in its treatment of asylum seekers and refugees from across the world. In fact, it is just one month since the home office publicly refused to apologise after[*illegally jailing 12 asylum seekers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/channel-crossings-wrongful-prosecutions-apology-b2013388.html) for steering their dinghies into the shipping canal of the English Channel. They were labelled "people smugglers" and prosecuted for crimes of which they were innocent. An appeal judge said the law had been "misunderstood" by the home office. Deliberately? You might come to suspect it. And all that is before we get to the Windrush scandal.

This culture has been long in the making, starting in the New Labour years with ID cards. In the early 2000s, Tony Blair set out a proposal that would see the policy introduced by stealth, starting with non-EU nationals who applied for a national insurance number. Eventually, the plan was, we were all to have them.

The "modern" identity scheme shifted the onus on us all to be able to prove we had the right to be here, rather than on authorities to demonstrate any illegal immigrants uncovered did not. Chillingly, the policy was to come along with a "national identity register". The home office drew up the proposals and shilled for them too, putting out questionable press releases about the extent of public support for compulsory ID, which hasn't been required in the UK since the Second World War.

Under Theresa May, this aggressive stance continued, as immigration became a major election issue. We saw the infamous "go home or face arrest" vans driven around our cities, using racist language any liberal, tolerant government should be seeking to eliminate by consensus, not perpetuating. It laid the foundations for today's "this is the best we can do" excuse over admissions of scattering Ukrainians. In 2014, visa services were also outsourced globally, including to Dubai. This is said to account for some of the administrative mess seen in recent days during attempts to support some of the Ukrainians with family in the UK.

Today, the Home Office bullies the vulnerable in part because it has a bully at the helm. A review into the behaviour of home secretary Priti Patel exposed bullying treatment of the department's civil service, a matter of apparently little importance to the prime minister - who chose to stick by her despite the findings in 2020. The situation in the Home Office was not created by Patel, but it is perpetuated by her presence and will not be resolved until she is gone.

Patel is used to parroting aggressive anti-immigration lines delivered in tandem with Boris Johnson's good-cop effort; the pair tried this tack again this week. The PM bafflingly stated the UK had done more than anyone to support refugees fleeing the horrors of conflict, when we have so far accommodated just 300 Ukrainians. Ireland, meanwhile, which has a population of 4 million people, is offering visa free entry to anyone fleeing [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and has already accepted 2,500 refugees and expects more. We know we can do better. We know we ought to.

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment sign up to our free weekly Voices newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

What must be surprising to Patel, after being a puppet of the right of the Conservative Party in recent years, is to find herself on the wrong side of her own faction. Even The Spectator has published scathing articles laying bare the moral vacuum at the centre of the UK's response to the daily growing refugee crisis.

Putin's patently unjust war, the bombing of a maternity hospital with children laying among the dead, has helped the party find a way back to its ethical roots. Johnson and Patel have been left behind in their neo-conservative project, spouting empty slogans rather than responding to human need. Even members of the cabinet are now turning against the practices of the home office.

It can't be saved; there's too little to salvage now. The only way to put right the last decade, and to respond with humanity to the immediate crisis in Ukraine, is to disband the home office and replace it with a new department, a new team, a new culture. What is already rotten cannot simply be reorganised into efficiency, even into pride.

Here's a chance to seize a moment of public agreement and do what seems too difficult: start over again.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Ftopic%2Frefugees-welcome-0&data=04%7C01%7CSunny.Hundal%40independent.co.uk%7C44b46804ea604841cd8a08d9fc33883c%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637818120540899656%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=l4gg%2B52yOIT2hLPpnYxHPrOwXzSBb782z4iApJgm5Z8%3D&reserved=0)

**Load-Date:** March 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Taoiseach admits to 'challenging' refugee situation after meeting Ukraine PM*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:658F-D591-DY4H-K0P0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 20, 2022 Wednesday 5:12 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 409 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** The Irish premier held an hour-long meeting with Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal at Shannon Airport.

**Body**

Ireland is facing a challenging situation amid efforts to house ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, the [*Taoiseach*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/taoiseach) has said.

The [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) premier held an hour-long meeting with the Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal on Wednesday afternoon at Shannon Airport in Co Clare.

The two leaders discussed the ongoing conflict in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , with Mr Shmyhal touching down briefly in Ireland before continuing his journey to Washington.

Speaking after the meeting, Mr Martin said that he had received a "first-hand account" of the horrors being waged by Russia against Ukraine and the objectives of the Ukrainian Government.

The meeting came two weeks after Ukrainian President [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) made a historic virtual address to the Irish parliament.

Mr Martin told reporters that the pair had discussed the possibility of a further round of EU sanctions against Russia.

The Taoiseach said that he had stressed the unwavering Irish support for Ukraine's bid to join the EU.

"The strategy of the Putin regime is not just killing people, but also causing huge international instability about energy and food," he said.

Mr Martin also admitted that Ireland was under pressure, due to the arrival of 25,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the weeks since the war began.

He said that the Government wanted to accelerate the processing of offers of accommodation for refugees.

He also said that the country was "close" to requiring mass accommodation centres for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, with questions asked about the potential use of the Millstreet Arena in Co Cork.

"I think we are close.

"I think facilities like that will be deployed as numbers continue to come into the country.

"The situation is very challenging indeed but we have to do everything we possibly can on all fronts to be of assistance and help the people fleeing Ukraine."

Mr Martin said it was impossible to predict how many refugees might need to be housed in emergency accommodation.

"There is a deliberate strategy, on behalf of Putin, to bomb people out of Ukraine.

"It is a shocking and scandalous sort of approach by the Russian Federation to deliberately try to create that terror.

On Tuesday, Irish Foreign Affairs Minister [*Simon Coveney*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/simon-coveney) told the UN Security Council that world leaders must do all they can to secure an urgent peace in Ukraine, amid an all-out Russia offensive in the Donbas region.

Mr Coveney also accused Russian forces of showing an "utter disregard" for international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians.

**Load-Date:** April 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*On Ukraine anniversary, EU pledges more support for refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67MH-BHH1-DY4H-K3SH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 24, 2023 Friday 9:50 AM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 367 words

**Byline:** Derek Gatopoulos and Theodora Tongas

**Highlight:** European Union officials have pledged continued support to millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, as they marked the anniversary of the Russian invasion

**Body**

European Union officials on Friday pledged continued support to millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, as they marked the anniversary of the Russian invasion.

“[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) can win this war, but we will be with Ukraine as long as it takes,” EU Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson told The Associated Press on the sidelines of a conference on migration near [*Athens*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/athens).

Johansson urged members to conclude long-running negotiations to adopt new EU-wide migration rules and to assist Ukrainians who wished to return home but maintain their temporary residence status in the EU.

More than 8 million people have fled Ukraine since the start of the war, according to the United Nations refugee agency, and nearly 5 million have registered for EU temporary protection or similar national protection schemes in Europe.

Bartosz Grodecki, the Polish deputy interior minister, whose country has taken in the most refugees traveling westward since the start of the war, said his government was prepared to receive more people who could be displaced by a widely anticipated spring offensive by Russian forces in Ukraine.

“We have this contingency planning,” Grodecki told the [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap). “I hope that it will not be necessary (but) ... we’ve been trained, planned properly, and we know how to be prepared.”

Margaritis Schinas, the EU Commission vice president, said Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) had failed in an effort to divide EU countries by applying pressure through high energy prices and migration.

“This is a sad anniversary, but it’s also an opportunity to draw some lessons from these horrible 12 months we’re leaving behind,” Schinas told the AP.

“And as far as (refugees from) Ukraine are concerned, the figures are stable,” he said.

Schinas added that he didn’t think it was “automatic” that refugee numbers would increase in the coming months.

“If it happens, we are ready, but it doesn’t seem to be the case for the time being.”

The migration conference Friday was organized by Greece, Austria, Poland and Lithuania to discuss issues that include border management problems, including border wall construction.

Officials attending the conference observed a minute of silence for the victims of the war in Ukraine.

**Load-Date:** February 24, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Refugee praises ‘love and kindness’ as Ukrainians join Eurovision watch party*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6870-DDK1-JBNF-W016-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 12, 2023 Friday 5:44 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 656 words

**Byline:** Jamel Smith

**Highlight:** Yuliia and her children escaped Lviv in western Ukraine last year and will now watch the Eurovision grand final with 250 Ukrainians in Wokingham.

**Body**

A Ukrainian refugee who had “two minutes” to flee her home with her children as Russian bombing began last year is now set to attend a Eurovision watch party in her adopted home of [*Berkshire*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/berkshire) thanks to the “love and kindness” of a local charity.

The Cowshed, a charity based in Wokingham, has been helping ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** since the start of the war and is holding a watch party on Saturday night for 250 Ukrainians who sought asylum in the local area.

Attendees will watch the grand final on big screens at the Reading FC Conference Centre, in a setting complete with almost a kilometre of hand-sewn bunting, chocolate gifts for children and celebratory flower arrangements.

Yuliia, a 40-year-old Ukrainian refugee living in Wokingham who did not wish to share her surname, went to The Cowshed after she arrived in [*England*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/england) one year ago having fled [*Lviv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lviv) in western [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) with her two young children and husband Volodymyr.

They gave us everything with such big love and kindness, and it was so important for us to feel that we are supported and that we are important

Yuliia

“They provided us with necessary items like clothing, toiletries, bedding,” she told the PA news agency.

“They gave us everything with such big love and kindness, and it was so important for us to feel that we are supported and that we are important.”

Yuliia added that in general Ukrainians are “very big fans” of Eurovision and they watch it “every year”.

She said: “I was so happy that the organisation (The Cowshed) with whom I’m working with now had the chance, with the help of the [*National Lottery*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/national-lottery) , to arrange this party for all Ukrainians who are in the UK.”

Yuliia will be bringing her children along to Saturday’s watch party to meet “her Ukrainian friends” and new people.

“It will be a wonderful opportunity for us to come together in the same place and have a wonderful evening of fun, beautiful music and tasty food,” Yuliia said.

The Ukrainian Wokingham resident described the moment when she and her family heard alarm sirens on the first day of Russia’s invasion last year.

“I will always remember the day on the 24th of February, I suppose it was a normal ordinary morning as always,” she said.

I thought it would be a great thing for us to do to help the people we’ve supported; it has been a really tough year for them

Sally Russell, founder of The Cowshed

“I went to the kitchen to prepare my coffee, but suddenly I heard alarm sirens.

“I couldn’t even realise that the war actually started but when I looked from the window, I saw people escaping and carrying their children, in that moment I realised that we were in danger.

“So, I just told my children that they literally have two minutes to prepare themselves, we grasped the suitcase and escaped.”

The Cowshed volunteers were busy on Friday sewing hundreds of Ukrainian flags and making sweet bags at the charity’s office.

More than 100 volunteers have been meeting at the charity three times per week to make a few hundred flags and put together bunting.

Sally Russell, the 57-year-old founder of The Cowshed, from Wokingham, said she organised the watch party after she saw that the National Lottery was offering funding for Ukrainian events in the UK.

“I thought it would be a great thing for us to do to help the people we’ve supported; it has been a really tough year for them,” she said.

“Just to be able to have a party and celebrate the fact that they won (Eurovision) last year, but they were not able to celebrate it in their own country, was really nice.”

Ms Russell added that her charity has helped “over 1,000” ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** since the war started last year.

She said: “(***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***) come to us and are able to choose clothing, bedding and any essential items like toiletries.

“When they fled their country, they obviously fled with very little, so when they arrived in England, they didn’t have any of the essential items that they needed, so we were here to help provide that.”

**Load-Date:** May 12, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Arrivals from Ukraine and Hong Kong have inflated migration figures – Shapps*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:687C-74D1-JBNF-W2XY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 14, 2023 Sunday 9:50 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 387 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** The minister stressed the importance of post-Brexit controls over immigration, amid speculation net migration figures could hit a record high.

**Body**

[*Grant Shapps*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/grant-shapps) has stressed the importance of post-Brexit UK controls over immigration policy, amid speculation net migration figures could hit a record high of up to one million.

Reports in recent days have suggested ministers are braced for official figures released later in May to show net migration of between 650,000 and 997,000.

This would surpass the previous peak of 504,000 in the year to June 2022 and place pressure on Mr Sunak over the Government’s 2019 pledge to reduce the numbers.

This country has had a big heart, we've opened the country for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, for British nationals from Hong Kong

Grant Shapps

Quizzed about the figures, Cabinet minister Mr Shapps said arrivals from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and [*Hong Kong*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hong-kong) had added perhaps as many as 300,000 to UK migration figures.

He told the Sophy Ridge On Sunday programme on Sky News: “This country has had a big heart, we’ve opened the country for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, for British nationals from Hong Kong.

“Take those two groups alone and it’s well over 300,000 of these numbers. And then of course we’ve had people from Syria and elsewhere. So actually, I’m rather proud of our record.”

He said Brexit has offered the UK “control” over its own immigration policies, as he was repeatedly pushed on whether ministers are now relaxed about immigration to the country.

The Office for Budget Responsibility has previously said legal migration will help offset slower growth in productivity, while Chancellor [*Jeremy Hunt*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jeremy-hunt) acknowledged in November it is “very important” to the economy.

Downing Street was forced this week to reject suggestions that the Prime Minister is harbouring conflicting aims on the issue.

Mr Shapps said on Sunday: “We have a [*Migration Advisory Committee*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/migration-advisory-committee) that says that there’s a shortage in this area, or that area.

“One of the advantages now with Brexit is we have control over our own policies. So we can say, we want people to help with a specific sector.

“We should always make sure that we only have people come here that our rules and our policy bring here.”

Asked if the UK should be more “relaxed” about migration, he said: “We should be proud of our record, where it’s people that we want here. But we should not allow people to come here where it is illegal.”

The Office for National Statistics migration figures are due to be published on May 25.

**Load-Date:** May 14, 2023

**End of Document**



[*I brought two Ukrainian refugees to the US. One month later, this is what they think*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67TW-F991-DY4H-K2G7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 21, 2023 Tuesday 2:39 PM GMT

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**Section:** AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 3442 words

**Byline:** Clare Cannon

**Highlight:** After Clare Cannon made the decision to sponsor Katya and Dima to settle in New York, she knew she’d be responsible for helping them overcome their culture shock. Here, she documents one month of ups and downs in the US — and what actually happens to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** once they arrive on American soil

**Body**

“What you mean laundry shared?” 27-year-old Dima asked me in his clipped Slavic accent over Zoom.

“Washing machines in apartments are not common in New York,” I told him.

Dima scowled and muttered, “Not sanitary,” in Russian under his breath. I remembered how odd I had thought it was to have a washing machine in place of an oven in my previous apartment in Kyiv. Back then, I was an American experiencing culture shock. Now, I was preparing two refugees to do it all the other way round.

“Any other questions?” I asked. It felt like the millionth Zoom conversation I’d had with Dima and his mother, Katya, over the past seven months. Ever since I’d offered to sponsor them to move to the US from war-torn Ukraine, we’d been laying the groundwork together for a successful move. We’d discussed everything from the history of Ellis Island to New York weather patterns to their choice to leave behind their two cats, Nick and Shere Khan, in Kyiv with friends. I was trying my best to get Dima and Katya ready for life in the US, but I knew nothing could fully convey how different things would be once they arrived.

“No. Thank you, Clare,” Dima said, in answer to today’s question. “See you soon.” Then he logged off for the final time.

From 2014 to 2019, I worked as a preschool teacher at an international school in Kyiv, and made the former Soviet republic my home. I’d always wanted to live abroad and so, when the opportunity came up when I was 27 years old, I jumped at the chance to live in Ukraine.

After I repatriated back to New York in 2019 to attend graduate school, I missed going to cafes with my friends, swimming at the Olympic-sized pool called Yunist in the city center, and walking around the elegant capital full of outdoor markets, gold-domed churches, and vibrant murals. I missed speaking Russian with my Ukrainian colleagues and students, attending Russian classes after school for ex-pat teachers, and meeting with my language exchange partner at Pazuta Hata for tea and napoleons. Kyiv had a special place in my heart.

Shortly after Putin’s invasion began on February 24, 2022, I watched the scenes of devastation on my iPad with horror. I sent encouragement to my friends and the families of my former students in Kyiv, but it didn’t feel like enough. So, when Biden began the United for Ukraine program that allowed American citizens to sponsor Ukrainians and bring them over to the country under their guidance, I knew I wanted to get involved.

My mother hoped I’d be able to sponsor the man she wished I’d come home with instead of my cat, except he couldn’t leave the country. Another Kyiv-based friend who I approached with an offer of sponsorship didn’t want to leave her husband. A former colleague that I was almost all set up to bring over unexpectedly had a family emergency, and could no longer leave Ukraine. I moved further down my list and proposed sponsorship to my former swim coach in Kyiv, Katya, as well as her son Dima. Dima had a medical exemption from the Ukrainian army, so, unlike most men, he would be allowed to cross the border.

I met Katya in 2016 through a colleague’s recommendation, when I was desperate to work with an experienced coach who would be patient with me since I didn’t speak Russian very well at the time. During our first training lesson at Yunist, Katya placed a giant black sponge around my ankles. I immediately sank towards the bottom of the pool, and was forced to use all of my muscles to push my way back towards the surface. “To go fast, you must first go slow,” Katya told me in Russian. “Swim.”

Three years later and back in the United States, I was now 35, single, living off my savings, and looking for work following graduation. Katya had taught me so much about sport and resilience during my time in Kyiv. Now it was time to pay her back.

And it turned out that sponsoring a Ukrainian refugee family is complicated. Really, bureaucratically complicated. But since my schedule was flexible, I had time to navigate the complexities of filing the I-134 forms; to make calls to lawyers, bankers, Catholic charities, missionaries, and UCIS; to scan, complete, and submit the massive amount of extra paperwork needed for sponsorship; and to Zoom and WhatsApp with Katya and Dima about the everyday realities of living in America. During spare moments, I wrote cover letters and applied for jobs. Checklists, forms, and scanned photocopies of official documents overflowed from my desk.

Six months later, I whooped when I received an email notifying me of travel authorization for Katya and Dima. I quickly messaged them, sharing the good news. Then I booked their one-way flight from Poland with frequent flyer miles. They would have to make their way through Ukraine and across the Polish border to get on the plane.

A week before she traveled from Kyiv to Warsaw to make the eight-hour flight to New York, Katya asked me, in Russian, “Would you like anything from Ukraine? Salo? Vodka? Roshen?”

“No,” I said. “Just you.”

On Friday, February 11th, Katya and Dima arrived at Newark Airport. I spent the morning at the new apartment in Elmhurst, Queens that I’d arranged for them after finding people in my extended social network who could assist with housing. All through the early hours of the day, I unpacked shipping boxes from Walmart, Amazon, and Target filled with sheets, bedding, pillows, cleaning supplies, towels, dishes, and an electric kettle. Pulling off the plastic from the household goods, I washed the dishes, made the beds, and stocked the refrigerator with kiwis, salami, cheese, and sourdough bread.

Then I drove through the bridges and tunnels of New Jersey to Terminal B, arriving an hour after their LOT flight landed. I snacked on hummus, kettle chips, and Diet Coke as I anxiously checked the monitors and gazed at the steady stream of arriving passengers. Two hours later, I finally spotted Dima schlepping a duffle bag and large suitcase completely wrapped in plastic. “Dima! Katya! Over here!” I called. We opened our arms wide and embraced each other. It felt as if no time had passed. Once again, our paths had merged into a single lane.

As a classic introduction to New York life, for their first Saturday in New York, I took Katya and Dima to a diner in Elmhurst. Leafing through the laminated pages of the menu, Katya was disappointed to discover that solyanka soup — a Russian concoction dating back to the 15th century that is traditionally made with salty meats, sausages, olives, pickles, and lemon — was not listed. Her face contorted as she saw that crackers, not bread, were placed next to the turkey cream soup the waitress placed in front of her. She lifted the liquid skeptically, and hesitantly tasted the yellowish goo. Then: “Look Dimchick, look!” Katya motioned to Dima and pointed to the table across from ours, where a couple was having brunch. “American pancakes! So big!”

I paid the bill and we left the diner. Zipping up our coats, we walked back toward their apartment while I pointed out shops, the local Duane Reade, their metro station by the 7, and the corner grocery store. Katya cooed over the displays of heart-shaped balloons, red roses, glittering containers of candy, and pink-hued teddy bears.

“Clareochka, what this?” she asked me in Russian.

“It’s Valentine’s Day next week,” I explained.

“Ahhh! Love day, yes?”

“Yup,” I replied, “The 14th of February.”

The following weekend, I took Katya and Dima on a tour of the city. Dima was keen to see an Apple store in real life, so we visited the one by Grand Central Station. We stopped for coffee at Bryant Park before continuing on for 30 blocks to Central Park so he could see a squirrel.

We fed the sparrows almonds as we drank cappuccinos. I was impressed with how much Dima’s English had improved. Over coffee, he explained that while waiting for the US to provide travel authorizations, they’d traveled to Germany, hoping to find a temporary safe place to live. During that time, which ended up stretching into six months of arduous waiting, everyone had spoken English to them, and so Dima’s English communication skills had improved dramatically since we’d last spoken.

“We go see this?” Dima asked, showing me a picture of a T-rex fossil on his phone.

“Sure!” I chirped, “We can go there tomorrow.”

“I learn about in university,” Dima said. “I want go see.” I thought about the Ukrainian Natural History Museum that I took my students to on field trips while in Kyiv. Housed in an elegant blue mansion, it featured a reconstructed Paleolithic hut, a giant mammoth fossil, and displays of Crimean and Carpathian animals, penguins, pinned sea creatures, and stuffed birds. The one thing notably not present: dinosaur bones. No wonder Dima wanted to go to the one here in New York.

On Monday the 20th, we visited the American Museum of Natural History, and surveyed the taxidermized animals and fossils on display. “I can’t believe this real,” Dima exclaimed posing for a picture in front of the gigantic dinosaur, “I’d like to buy present for my friend’s children.”

We roamed through the various halls, examining ocean life, gemstones, and the hall of human origins, when Katya suddenly stopped in front of a humanoid skeleton and said in Russian, “Clarechick! You see? What a good swimmer! Look at the ideal proportion of the hands to the torso.”

The following Friday was the one-year anniversary of the war. I met Katya and Dima outside the Tompkins Square Library, where Razom, a Ukrainian nonprofit organization, had advertised an event for coffee, conversation and English lessons. I thought it might be a good way for them to meet other recent transplants from Ukraine in a similar position. We entered the library classroom on the top floor. At the table were two other women from Ukraine, and two teachers standing by a whiteboard where: “Friday, February 24, 2023. Today is a sad day” was written in blue dry-erase marker.

“Welcome, everyone,” the male teacher — an American from California — said, as we joined the group. “Today we are going to talk about our feelings. First, let’s introduce ourselves.” Going around the table, each attendee said their name and something that they missed about Ukraine. A woman with vibrant red hair missed her job as a high-up official at the nuclear power plant in Kyiv, and worried that the plant would break down again. Another woman said that she missed her family, friends, and apartment, all of which are now “in the clouds.”

“Hello, I Dima,” said Dima. “My mother professional swimmer for Soviet Union.” He added that he missed his close friends in Kyiv, who he’d known since university.

Katya then stated hesitantly in English, “Hello. I Kateryna. I miss my cat.”

“We are so happy to have you here,” the female teacher — also an American, this time from the Midwest — told the class. “Could you teach us something in Ukrainian?”

Everyone at the table looked around at each other and laughed.

“No one here speak,” Dima explained. “Not all Ukraine speak Ukrainian.” Ukrainian has more in common with Polish and Czech than Russian, and it isn’t spoken by everyone in Ukraine. Since western Ukraine used to be a part of Poland and Austria, Ukrainian is more widely spoken in the west; in Odessa and eastern Ukraine, there are closer historical and linguistic ties with Russia. The school that I worked for in Kyiv had encouraged ex-pat teachers to study Russian, as they thought it would be more useful for us when we traveled outside of Ukraine to other former republics such as Lithuania, Estonia, or Georgia.

After we wrapped up with Razom, I took Katya and Dima to Veselka, a Ukrainian restaurant in the East Village, where we ordered borscht, pierogies, and potato pancakes.

“I forgot how good food is from home,” Dima proclaimed as he slurped borscht and wolfed down meat and potato dumplings. “In Germany, I just ate ramen. From box.”

Later, we went to another Ukrainian refugee-friendly event that had been advertised in Razom’s recent emails. I was surprised to recognize someone I’d met at a New Year’s party in Kyiv back in 2017. After the event, I approached him and learned that he’d moved to New York before the war, and was now working as a videographer in the city. I introduced him to Katya and Dima, and told him I’d send him a message on Facebook.

The next day, I met Katya and Dima at the Holy Trinity Cathedral Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the East Village. Handing over her Ukrainian passport, Katya registered herself with Razom, providing her email, phone, and WhatsApp number so that she could be added to their email registry, and receive assistance with her future needs. I walked with her over to the large table where volunteers were passing out bags of carrots, onions, potatoes, and other food products, while other refugees dug through piles of used clothing, shoes, household goods, and hygiene products. The walls of the room were decorated with images of the Ukrainian national poet, Taras Shevchenko, and icons of saints.

“A sweet for someone sweet,” Katya told me in Russian, as she handed me a Roshen hazelnut chocolate bar she’d found in the donation box. I passed it back to her. “Net,” she said, opening my backpack and zipping it inside alongside the photocopied handouts from Razom which provided information on home health aid training, security guard positions, construction work, legal counsel and information on English classes.

Dima had loitered outside the church when Katya and I went in, and now I went outside to locate him so that he could undergo his US-mandated tuberculosis testing and receive the flu vaccine. Dima was standing outside of the cathedral with crossed arms. “Clare, I not go in,” he said.“This church.”

“Dima, you have to go get registered,” I explained.

“This for people who have nothing. I have home. I not go to church,” Dima retorted.

Exasperated, I went to find Katya. She was inside, chatting with another refugee about finding work.

“Katya, did Dima have a bad experience with the Orthodox church?” I asked. She nodded but didn’t say anything more. I could only guess what Dima’s experiences were. Many of my other Ukrainian friends had been outraged by the corrupt mishandling of tithes in the Orthodox church. It was known throughout Ukraine, too, that the KGB had used churches to spy on parishioners. Because Ukraine is technically an Orthodox country, the line between church and state is blurry at best, and churches are likely to be seen as an unfriendly extension of the state, especially by younger people. Thinking about it that way, I could understand Dima’s reticence.

“Let’s go to a café. Get some coffee, and take a break Clarechick,” Katya said. I nodded in agreement.

Seated at a cozy table in a local café, I explained to Dima, “This event is sponsored by the city of New York and Razom. The city has used different churches, synagogues, libraries, and other buildings since the 1900’s as community centers for newly arrived immigrants such as the Irish, Italians, and Polish.”

“I sorry, Clare,” Dima said, “Twenty-six years of thinking one way, forgive me. Coming to America is my dream.” I could only imagine what it would be like to grow up in a country recovering from decades of generational traumas such as the genocide of the Ukrainian people by forced starvation in the Holodomor, the collectivization of farmland, or the oppression of their national language and culture throughout the Soviet regime.

“It’s okay. I understand,” I said. “This is New York. Not Ukraine. Here we have separation of church and state. Don’t worry. I checked. It’s city officials in the back. I got you.”

We returned to the cathedral, and Dima dutifully signed himself up for the flu vaccine and the TB test.

\*\*

Katya and Dima’s first few weeks in America were complicated by the fact of Dima’s diabetes. Navigating the US healthcare system is complicated at the best of times — but throwing rapid immigration into the mix made it even more so.

“Clare, help me buy test strips. For sugar,” Dima said to me when he arrived. “I need for testing. We going to medical center soon?”

“Yes,” I said. “We have to wait for your medical insurance cards to come.” I was thankful that he had brought six to seven weeks’ worth of insulin with him to the United States, because I knew from experience that it could take four to six weeks to be fully enrolled in Medicaid. Thankfully, for Katya and Dima, it took them a week to be enrolled, and about two weeks to receive their medical insurance cards.

One reason why I believed New York would be such a good fit for Katya and Dima was because I knew that they would be eligible for the same Medicaid program I was enrolled in. In other parts of the states, access to insulin would be complicated, prohibitively expensive or both. But it wasn’t exactly simple in New York, either.

After navigating the 42-page NY and NJ sponsor handbook, I’d figured out how to set up bank accounts, find English classes and locate an affordable fitness centers that had an adequately sized pool for lap swimming. Now, I went back to it to work out how to schedule medical appointments for new arrivals. The answer wasn’t straightforward, so I also asked Razom, who directed me to a Coney Island hospital. I was then rerouted by the hospital to the Customer Service Department, then Primary Care, then to NYC-4NYC, where an hour-long phone call was needed to eventually schedule an emergency medical appointment for Dima in Elmhurst.

The following morning, I made the hour-long trek from my apartment in the Upper West Side to Elmhurst Medical Center to accompany Dima. At 8 o’clock in the morning, lines of patients were wrapped around the corridors and waiting rooms. People were frantically checking in at kiosks, pleading with hospital staff, and impatiently sitting and standing waiting to be seen by a doctor.

“Where are you?” I called Dima as I stood in line at the Primary Care office.

“We coming. We at entrance,” he added.

“Which entrance?” I asked, “There’s so many.” I made my way back through the throngs of people filling the labyrinthine hallways. I finally spotted Dima’s green jacket. “This way,” I gestured, as they dutifully followed me back through the waves of people.

After an hour of standing in line, Dima and I were able to check in with a receptionist. She impatiently typed on her keyboard frowning. “They did this all wrong!” she complained. Even Dima’s name had been spelled wrong on his new medical records. Twenty minutes later, she looked up and handed us a slip of paper. “You need to go here. To Diagnostics. I’ve rescheduled your appointment.” We returned to the sea of people and drifted to a new part of the hospital.

Three further hours of waiting passed. By the time Dima had had his vitals taken, seen a doctor, and had his blood drawn, I checked my watch and realized we’d been at the facility for five hours. And when we finally left, script in hand, we arrived at a local pharmacy and were told that the doctor had written Dima up for the wrong kind of insulin and forgotten to send any filling instructions. The prescription we’d spent all day procuring was useless.

“I’m sorry,” I told Dima, defeated. We would try again at Mount Sinai the next day. I was absolutely horrified by the claustrophobic conditions in Elmhurst, even though I knew that the staff was doing their absolute best to meet their patients’ needs. Compared to Kyiv, where I could go and see a specialist without needing a referral or prior authorization, this was chaos. I missed the beautiful private clinics in Ukraine, and the quiet, dignified public hospitals which provided excellent individualized care.

At the end of their first month in the States, I asked Katya and Dima what their impressions of the country were now they’d spent some time living here. What was better in Ukraine, I asked, and what was better in the US?

Katya quickly responded in Russian that the “people, dynamics,” and “atmosphere” are better in New York — but she misses the “parks, evenings in Kyiv, and [affordable] taxis” back home.

Dima thought a little while longer before responding. He said he liked the “scale and possibilities” in New York, and that “the buildings are very impressive”. Additionally, he said, he appreciates “the care of people about each other and maximum support for everyone who needs it” in America.

When he thinks of Kyiv, he said, he misses the “beautiful parks, each with its own history,” the picturesque underground system, and the greenery in general. He showed me a YouTube video showcasing the vibrant vermillion hues of the chestnut trees which line the city’s streets, before finally adding to his list: “Very beautiful girls in Kyiv.”

**Load-Date:** March 21, 2023

**End of Document**



[*'We feed everyone': How a vegan restaurant in Lviv is helping hundreds of Ukrainian refugees every day*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651T-HV21-JBNF-W029-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 20, 2022 Sunday 8:47 AM GMT

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**Section:** WORLD; Version:3

**Length:** 1004 words

**Byline:** Gino Spocchia

**Highlight:** 'People are dying because of hunger'

**Body**

It has never been busier for 26-year-old Vitaly and his Vega Room [*restaurant*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/restaurant) in [*Lviv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lviv) , western [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine). The numbers at[*Vega Room*](https://www.instagram.com/p/CauIxjAtJAg/) have risen tenfold since [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) invaded on 24 February, which forced a wave of women, children and older people to [*attempt to leave*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-refugees-family-b2025862.html%22%20title=%22Inside%20a%20theatre%20in%20Ukraine%20providing%20refuge%20to%20families%20fleeing%20war) the country.

Around 200 people will arrive at his restaurant's door daily for a hot meal, which Vitaly admits is more than Vega Room has ever had. On the menu? Buckwheat, grains and simple food, he said.

"It's just regular soups, or we'll do some cereals like buckwheat, rice, and some meat substitution; we just use tofu, falafel, which are very useful, actually. And people are very satisfied with them," Vitaly told The Independent. "But on the other hand, there is actually a problem with those products, especially with tofu and with some meat substitution, because it's difficult to find them right now."

Vitaly said his Ukrainian supplier in Kharkiv has been effectively[*shuttered by the war.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-kharkiv-nuclear-reactor-b2033581.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine%20says%20Russia%20has%20bombed%20a%20facility%20with%20a%20nuclear%20reactor%20in%20Kharkiv) "Nothing works now, so yeah, we cannot get all the needed products from Ukraine. And now I am asking my friends to send me some products."

A month ago, Vega Room would see about 30 or 40 customers come and go in a single day, with people enjoying plant-based pierogi, cabbage rolls and even a vegan stroganoff.

"It's not really big," Vitaly said from his home in Lviv, where he has taken in two families from Ukraine's east. "It has six tables, so at the same time there could be 20 people maximum. Now it's something like 200 a day, so for us, it's a huge amount of people."

The only difference now is that these people aren't paying. Vega Room has become a vital part of[*the humanitarian effort*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/ukraine-humanitarian-corridors-zelensky-putin-b2034135.html%22%20title=%22In%20some%20cases,%20'humanitarian%20corridors'%20in%20Ukraine%20could%20do%20more%20harm%20than%20good) underway in Lviv and elsewhere in Ukraine.

"Maybe not all of them are [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) but we don't ask them to show passports," said Vitaly of the Monday-to-Sunday restaurant operation. "I don't think people are trying to take advantage here - we just feed everyone."

About a month ago, Vitaly had announced the closure of his Vega Room business because of the threat of Covid and a war with Russia. "We were hearing, like almost every day, that Russia is going to attack us. But we didn't take this seriously. No one actually expected that," he said. "And after the war started ... I didn't know what to do, or what the future with the restaurant is going to be because I was really surprised."

That was when he was approached by Vegan Ukraine, a charity that wanted to turn Vega Room into a kitchen for refugees fleeing Russia's assault. He said it was spearheaded by two sisters who were regular customers of his restaurant, and who organised funding for his refugee vegan kitchen. It has provided Vega Room and now thousands of refugees with a lifeline.

"When the war started we lost our workers because some of them went to Poland. We had a waitress and she went to Poland...they were scared of the war and so we didn't have any choice. We decided to close it. But then this initiative came up," said Vitaly, who has signed up to be a Ukrainian army volunteer.

And his rent has been suspended by Lviv's authorities too, which has been[*bracing itself for a Russian assault*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/russia-ukraine-lviv-buildings-protected-b2033027.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine:%20Historic%20statues%20and%20buildings%20in%20Lviv%20covered%20to%20protect%20them%20from%20damage) on one of Ukraine's westernmost cities after an attack on a nearby [*military base*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-latest-news-kherson-putin-war-b2034552.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine%20news%20-%20live:%20Nine%20killed%20in%20airstrike%20on%20Lviv%20military%20base%2035%20km%20from%20Polish%20border,%20officials%20say%20OLD) on Sunday. The bombing just miles from the Polish border sent shockwaves through Lviv, which has seen little of the war waged by Russia.

"It was horrible," said Vitaly, "because many people didn't expect that, you know. Until today, we live here in a peaceful place. We didn't expect something like this to happen."

Like all businesses in Lviv, Vega Room has been forced to adapt to [*the vast number of people*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/europe-ukraine-refugees-iraq-syria-b2027840.html%22%20title=%22%20Europe%20opens%20arms%20to%20millions%20of%20Ukraine%20refugees%20but%20how%20many%20people%20did%20countries%20take%20from%20other%20wars?) fleeing war, with estimates suggesting some 200,000 people have settled temporarily in Ukraine's seventh biggest city.

Lviv normally has a population of about 740,000, with close ties to nearby Poland and Hungary. Estimates from the UN have said some 1.85 million people have left Ukraine, and up to 4 million could still do so.

"There is a huge problem with humanitarian problems in the east," explained Vitaly. "People are dying because of hunger there and the worst part is you're totally helpless. You know, I want to contribute to those people."

Describing himself as "cosmopolitan", the long-time vegan and business owner said while he couldn't imagine fighting five years ago, this war is "already the second conflict because the war started in 2014 when Russia occupied Crimea".

He added some comforting words: "But to be honest, in 2014, people weren't as united as they are now."

And he said that the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelensky, has "inspired" people. "I think if it was our previous president or the previous president like Petro Poroshenko, for example, no one would fight that strongly for the country."

As for the future, Vitaly says he hopes to fully reopen Vega Room when the war ends and that his customers - new and old - will return. "Actually I want to open as soon as possible. But right now I think we can have two conditions; the place can be closed and give some taxes, or the place can be open and feed refugees and I think this is what is most appropriate for us right now."

"I hope when the war will finish, of course, we will reopen this as a normal business place," he said. Anybody wanting to contribute funds to Vega Rooms refugee kitchen can contribute with [*donation details here*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fvitalysavchuk2312%2Fposts%2F3190484577855386&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/ukraine-refugee-lviv-vegan-kitchen-b2036106.html).

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian student who became British Army translator aces exams*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6661-PNH1-JBNF-W435-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 18, 2022 Thursday 1:08 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 519 words

**Byline:** Bronwen Weatherby

**Highlight:** Zorian Tytych, from Kyiv, got four As in his A-levels while helping ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and soldiers in the UK.

**Body**

A Ukrainian student who became a translator for the [*British Army*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british-army) after Russia invaded his home country has aced his [*A-levels*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/a-levels).

Zorian Tytych, 18, got four As and has been given a place at Durham University while his father fights on the front line.

The teenager came to the UK to study prior to the outbreak of war and watched in horror as his family fled his home city of [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv).

While studying at Cardiff Sixth Form College in [*Wales*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wales) he volunteered as a translator to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** staying with host families in the capital and after sitting his exams he signed up as a translator with the armed forces to help some of the 10,000 Ukrainian soldiers receiving training in the UK.

His father, a lawyer, signed up to fight for his country the day after the war began and is on active service stationed on the Belarus border.

“Before the war started my mother and father were lawyers,” said Zorian. “Dad was on the Ukrainian committee for judicial reform, taking things up to the European Union level.

“He joined the military the day after the war started, signing up to the territorial defence and receiving basic training. He did this because he wanted to protect his home and support his country.

“My cousin is doing the same and is now based near [*Kherson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kherson) where he is right in the thick of it and all the shelling. My uncle is currently in the recruitment process for joining the army.”

He added: “I cannot think too deeply about my father as it would drive me mad with worry, but I am very proud of him. I know he would feel it is a disgrace if he didn’t join the army.

“But I cannot think about it too much as it just makes me really concerned.”

Despite fearing for his family, Zorian was able to get an A grade in all four of his subjects – physics, maths, biology and chemistry.

His mother was forced to evacuate to Lviv in western Ukraine when gunfire drew too near to their home but she has since returned after Russian forces retreated from the city.

He said: “As well as studying for my A-levels at Cardiff Sixth Form College, I have been volunteering, visiting the homes of British people in Cardiff who have taken in ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

“I am helping these families by translating documents for them, helping them with day-to-day tasks and being a friend to them.

“They need someone they can communicate with.

“Britain now has 10,000 Ukrainian soldiers receiving training from the British Army here in the UK and they need translators and helpers.”

Zorian said that as he is unable to safely return home he will remain in the UK to study and stay with his godmother in London before heading to Durham in September.

College principal Gareth Collier said Zorian had been volunteering throughout his “very busy A-level revision period”.

He said one host family who Zorian worked with described him as “an example of an outstanding, selfless individual willing to help others where he can”.

Mr Collier added: “He has been an active member of the school community and we are delighted that he is able to continue his education here in the UK with these tremendous results.”

PA

**Load-Date:** August 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*‘Essential not to lose focus’ on war in Ukraine, Varadkar warns*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69GS-C4M1-JBNF-W461-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

October 27, 2023 Friday 11:09 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 546 words

**Byline:** By Cillian Sherlock

**Highlight:** The Taoiseach said there was a need to ‘double down on’ political, military and financial support for Ukraine.

**Body**

[*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) premier [*Leo Varadkar*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/leo-varadkar) has said it was “essential” to not “lose focus” on the war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) as global attention focuses on the Israel-Palestine conflict.

The [*Taoiseach*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/taoiseach) was speaking ahead of a two-day meeting of the EU’s 27 leaders in Brussels on Friday.

Mr Varadkar said on the first day of the summit that some countries wanted attention to be drawn away from the Russian invasion of Ukraine and towards the threat of an escalating conflict in the Middle East.

“Because of all the other things that are happening in the world, not least in the Middle East, it’d be very easy to lose focus on the war in Ukraine, and it is essential that we don’t do that,” he told reporters on Friday.

“We need to continue, if not continue, double down on – our support for Ukraine, in terms of political, military, financial and other support.”

He said European leaders will also discuss migration but there is no expectation of any new conclusions.

He added: “We have a very strong view that Ukraine has a right to defend its sovereignty, its independence, its democracy.

“If we don’t stop (Vladimir) Putin in Ukraine, he won’t stop there.

“So it is a threat to all of us and Ireland will continue with support for Ukraine until victory.”

His comments come as the Irish government debate on how to change their offering to the thousands of Ukrainians fleeing the war and arriving in Ireland.

As of this month, 96,338 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have arrived in Ireland since the start of the war in February 2022.

The Government has said that as a further 30-50,000 are expected to arrive in the next year, it must change the current open-ended accommodation it is offering, and potentially reduce entitlements to social welfare supports.

There were disagreements at Cabinet this week after it was proposed a three-month limit would be placed on the period the state would be obliged to provide accommodation to Ukrainians.

Ireland’s Minister for Public Expenditure Paschal Donohoe has said any change to state provisions for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** must be “sustainable”, while cautioning that no decision had yet been taken.

The minister, who is attending the EU summit in Brussels in his capacity as president of the Eurogroup of Eurozone finance ministers, said cabinet would come to a decision soon.

“This is an issue that’s already been discussed at many different levels within government, it’s been discussed a number of times in the Ukraine cabinet sub-committee, and we regularly discuss policy issues in relation to migration and our support for the people of Ukraine who are facing this terrible war and the discussion that happened in cabinet earlier in the week is just part of that deliberative process,” he said.

“So I’d expect that it will conclude soon.

“The Government has not made a decision on that.

“This is a complex matter.

“The Irish people, the Irish state have shown a remarkable ability to support nearly 100,000 people that have come to our country in the last two years.

“We just need to consider how we can continue to do this in the future and do so in a way that is sustainable.

“Government hasn’t made the decision on the matter.

“We’re aware of the many consequences of any decision that we make.

“And I’d expect that in the next few weeks the matter will be considered again,” he said.

**Load-Date:** October 27, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Number of Ukrainian families facing homelessness in England rises by 44% over winter*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67HJ-34X1-DY4H-K4VF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 10, 2023 Friday 11:47 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 701 words

**Byline:** Holly Bancroft

**Highlight:** Around 700 Homes for Ukraine sponsorships have broken down in the past two months

**Body**

The number of [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) families facing homelessness in England has increased by 44 per cent over the winter months as sponsorship arrangements continue to break down.

[*Some 4,295 Ukrainian households have turned to local authorities for help*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/homes-for-ukraine-sponsors-war-russia-b2207635.html) since the 24 February last year, with 1,310 doing so in the period from November 2022 to January 2023.

This has been fuelled by 705 Ukrainian families leaving their [*Homes for Ukraine sponsorships*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/cost-of-living-homes-for-ukraine-b2142140.html) over the winter months, either because the relationship has broken down or because their agreement has come to an end.

The government launched its flagship scheme in March last year, prompting thousands of Brits to open their homes to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. The sponsors had to commit to providing accommodation for at least six months. Nearly a year on since the start of the [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) war, many of those living arrangments are coming to an end, leaving refugees with nowhere to go.

[*Charities have repeatedly warned*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-homeless-crisis-point-b2157022.html) government about the growing number of homeless Ukrainians that are in desperate need of housing. The Refugee Council said the new figures were “very worrying” and the Local Government Association, which represents councils across England and Wales, said that “urgent solutions” were needed.

Refugees at Home, a charity that finds hosts for Ukrainians, said that “hosting is only meant to be a temporary solution”.

As of November 2022, 199,500 visa applications had been granted to Ukrainians under the family scheme or the sponsorship scheme.

[*The Independent revealed last month that thousands of* ***Ukrainian******refugees*** *are being housed in hotels*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-visa-home-office-hotels-b2256853.html) as councils stuggle to deal with the rising number presenting as homeless.

Renting privately has become very difficult for some Ukrainians as landlords require thousands of pounds in deposits and backing from rent guarantors. With limited social housing availabe, many councils have had no choice but to place Ukrainians in temporary accommodation.

Latest government figures show that 735 Ukrainian families have been put in temporary accommodation by councils, and 1,510 have been given an offer of settled accommodation.

Of the 4,295 homeless households, 2,985 have dependent children and 1,310 are single households. From 18 November to 27 January, there was a 45 per cent rise in the number of Homes for Ukraine arrangements that have broken down -from 1,550 to 2,255.

Enver Solomon, CEO of the Refugee Council, said: “The increase in ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** facing [*homelessness*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homelessness) in the UK is very worrying given the trauma they have had to endure escaping their homeland.

“The large number of Ukrainians who have been welcomed into our local communities is remarkable and it’s vital that they are now supported to find their own homes and prevented from becoming homeless.”

A spokesperson for the Local Government Association, which represents more than 350 councils across England and Wales, said: “We have been raising concerns with government on the growing number of Ukrainians presenting as homeless to councils, and in particular the significant rise in those who arrived through the Homes for Ukraine scheme.”

They added that they were pleased government was working with councils to reduce risk of homelessness, but added: “More detail is urgently needed on the £150million [funding] announced in December in light of these new figures”.

They added: “We are also concerned that there is no funding beyond the first year for councils to help families find permanent homes and funding for arrivals in 2023 has halved. If numbers continue to increase, we want to work with government to review funding.”

Lauren Scott, executive direct of Refugees at Home, said: “Some local authorities are coming up with sensible approaches, such as acting as guarantors to help Ukrainians move into privately rented homes. But with no clear national strategy in place the situation across the country is patchy, confused and inconsistent.

“People opened their doors to those fleeing Ukraine with the best of intentions. But lives move on, and it’s no surprise that so many placements are now coming to an end – amicably or otherwise.”

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has been contacted for comment.

**Load-Date:** February 10, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Forensic police find a 10th body in the charred remnants of a Spanish apartment building*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BDB-W391-DY4H-K00N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 24, 2024 Saturday 11:09 AM GMT

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**Length:** 289 words

**Byline:** Alicia Len

**Highlight:** The death toll in a fire that engulfed an apartment block in the Spanish city of Valencia has risen to 10 after forensic police found one more body inside the charred building Saturday

**Body**

The death toll from a dramatic fire that left two residential buildings charred in the [*Spanish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/spanish) city of [*Valencia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/valencia) rose to 10 on Saturday after authorities announced they had located the remains of what they believed was the last missing person.

Forensic police found the 10th victim inside the scorched building, national government delegate in Valencia Pilar Bernabé told journalists. Police will proceed with [*DNA testing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dna-testing) to confirm the identities of all the victims, she said.

While there were no other missing persons reported, Bernabé stressed that police and firefighters would continue the “complex” work of combing through the building debris in search of any other possible victim.

It was not immediately known how many people were in the two buildings when the fire broke out, but the complex had some 140 apartments.

The blaze that appeared to begin in one home Thursday afternoon engulfed the rest of the 14-story apartment block in less than an hour, raising questions about whether construction materials used on the façade may have contributed to the fire spreading so furiously.

Neighbors described seeing the rapid evolution of the flames, with residents stuck on balconies and children screaming. Those left homeless from the fire, including many ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who lived in the large residential complex, were initially given refuge in city hotels but were expected to be moved to other accommodation over the weekend.

Experts suggested that a type of cladding might have made the blaze spread faster. However, Valencia Mayor María José Catalá said the fire’s cause was still unknown and that it was too early to comment on whether some materials used in the construction of the modern complex might have worsened it.

**Load-Date:** February 24, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Double payments to Ukrainian refugee hosts amid cost-of-living crisis – old*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:666X-RSB1-JBNF-W17J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 22, 2022 Monday 10:23 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:4

**Length:** 793 words

**Byline:** Jemma Crew

**Highlight:** Refugees minister Lord Richard Harrington said he has been lobbying the Treasury ‘very hard’ to double the £350-a-month ‘thank you’ payment.

**Body**

Monthly payments to sponsors of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** should double to help them carry on hosting for longer than six months while the cost of living spirals, the minister responsible has said.

Around 25,000 offers of accommodation from hosts under the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine scheme have been taken up so far, with an average of three Ukrainians living in each home, [*Lord*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lord) [*Richard Harrington*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/richard-harrington) said.

Six months on from the start of the Russian invasion, the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) is asking existing hosts to extend their generosity and appealing for new sponsors to step forward.

It comes amid a deepening cost-of-living crisis, with energy bills expected to soar by 80% going into winter, rocketing inflation and rising interest rates.

I can argue to the Treasury -it's my job to say: ‘Well, you actually save money, because people then are not becoming homeless’

Lord Harrington

Councils have also warned that homelessness could rise if initial six-month placements with hosts end without other options in place.

Lord Harrington said he has been lobbying the Treasury “very hard” to double the £350-a-month “thank you” payment for sponsors who house refugees for longer than half a year – the minimum period expected of hosts.

He told the PA news agency: “The costs… they’re paying maybe a big chunk of rent themselves, the mortgage payments have gone up and everything, and I think it’s perfectly reasonable, in my view, to increase the amount that we’re paying them.”

Wednesday marks six months since the start of the war in Ukraine.

More than 115,000 Ukrainians have arrived in the UK under its visa schemes, according to latest Government figures, including around 81,700 refugees under the sponsorship scheme.

Around 4-5,000 people are arriving each week, Lord Harrington said.

He said the Government has emailed everyone who initially expressed an interest in the sponsorship scheme, to see if they are still interested in taking part if they are not already hosting.

He expects roughly 50,000 of the 200,000-plus people who registered their interest initially will go on to be hosts.

In particular, the Government wants to recruit extra hosts in areas close to where refugees are currently being sponsored.

This would mean refugees are matched with new hosts nearby so they do not need to leave communities where they have started putting down roots.

“I’m not worried about the shortage of offers; I’m more concerned that they’re in the right area,” he added.

Lord Harrington said his priority is to stop people becoming homeless, and he is hoping to achieve that by encouraging hosts to continue for longer with existing placements, recruiting new sponsors, and enabling refugees to move into the private rented sector.

So far, more than 1,300 Ukrainian single households and families have been assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness as of July 29.

He said he has met with groups representing landlords to ask if they will waive reference requirements for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

He added that some councils have said they will act as guarantors for those wanting to rent homes, which he is trying to expand.

Lord Harrington said: “I suspect some of them will need an extra budget to do it, but again, I can argue to the Treasury – it’s my job to say: ‘Well, you actually save money, because people then are not becoming homeless’.”

The minister is also asking for extra funding money for [*English*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/english) language lessons, which he said are the “key to employment”.

The amount being requested is in the “low tens of millions”, he said, adding: “It’s critical. We will get that money back because people get into employment”.

The Treasury said the monthly thank you payments for hosts are to “recognise their generosity”, and do not affect benefit entitlement nor council tax status.

A spokeswoman said: “We have already acted to make sure these payments are exempt from tax, and continue to monitor and review the support provided under the scheme.”

Well done to all those hosting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. We understand that hosting is both brilliant and challenging. Catch up on a special event we put on a few weeks ago to help you keep going. [*https://t.co/QKzFQQMwIm*](https://t.co/QKzFQQMwIm) — Sanctuary Foundation (@SanctuaryFd) [*August 16, 2022*](https://twitter.com/SanctuaryFd/status/1559486309483397121?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

The Sanctuary Foundation, a charity which is helping support ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and sponsors, is launching a campaign – Not Too Late To Host – with the matching service Opora to encourage more people to become sponsors.

Sanctuary Foundation director Dr Krish Kandiah said the need for hosts is “even more desperate” now.

He said: “War has spread across the country over the past six months and lives have been torn apart.

“Neighbouring countries are struggling to cope. This is why we are urging more British people to welcome Ukrainians into their homes.”

**Load-Date:** August 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Polish leader at Hanukkah thanks Jews for aiding Ukrainians*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6748-SD51-JBNF-W10F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

December 19, 2022 Monday 7:36 PM GMT

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**Length:** 342 words

**Byline:** Vanessa Gera

**Highlight:** Poland’s president has paid tribute to Jewish communities in Poland and worldwide for the help they have extended to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** this year

**Body**

Poland's president led a Hanukkah ceremony on Monday where he paid tribute to Jewish communities in Poland and worldwide for the help they have extended to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** this year.

Poland borders Ukraine to the west and has accepted millions of refugees, including many who have chosen to remain. Poland's Jewish community has been active in organizing housing, food, education and other kinds of help for them.

President [*Andrzej Duda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/andrzej-duda) said that as “the host of this land,” he was grateful to the Jewish community for what it has done.

“Thank you so much for welcoming our guests, newcomers from Ukraine, into your community, into your homes, into your prayers,” Duda told those gathered in the presidential palace in [*Warsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warsaw).

He noted that the Jewish community has helped both Ukrainian [*Jews*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jews) and non-Jews.

Hanukkah, the festival of lights, celebrates light overcoming darkness, powerful symbolism as Ukrainians suffer in the dark and cold amid repeated Russian attacks on their power infrastructure.

Poland's chief rabbi, Michael Schudrich, said it was a time “to remember also those who have no light.”

"We pray that next year, the next Hanukkah, there will be light in Ukraine, too.”

Poland was once home to a Jewish community that numbered more than 3.3 million. Most were murdered by the German forces who invaded and occupied Poland during World War II.

“We know what it means to be a refugee, we know what it means to run from death," Schudrich told The Associated Press ahead of the candle lighting event.

Today, Poland's Jewish community is growing but remains small. Its efforts to help refugees have been funded from abroad, particularly by the Jewish Federations of North America, an umbrella group that has raised more than $84 million to help Ukrainians harmed by the war.

The organization's president, Eric Fingerhut, told the [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) that the symbol of light shining through the darkness is relevant now for Ukraine given the “deliberate effort by the Russian and their military operation to knock out lights and power and make the country dark.”

**Load-Date:** December 19, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Villagers throw eggs at penis-headed statue of Putin erected in Bell End*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:673D-DJP1-DY4H-K460-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

December 15, 2022 Thursday 4:34 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 306 words

**Byline:** Edd Dracott

**Highlight:** Organisers of the effigy are planning to create miniatures which will be sold to raise money for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

**Body**

A penis-headed statue of [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) has been erected in the village of Bell End to commemorate him as “Bellend of the Year” in protest against Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

The effigy appeared on Thursday morning alongside a street sign in the centre of the [*Worcestershire*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/worcestershire) village and eggs which could be thrown at the likeness of the Russian president.

The organiser of the protest, who wished to remain anonymous, told the PA news agency: “I needed to award somebody with the Bellend of the Year award and I thought there was one person who has universally been a bellend this year – and that’s Vladimir Putin.

“You could just throw eggs at the statue, which people did so willingly and quite happily.

“It’s been very well received. One person said, ‘I thought it was my boss for a second’.”

The co-ordinator said they plan to create and sell miniatures of the statue to raise money for a charity supporting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

“I’ve seen over the course of the year the devastation that has happened in Ukraine and that so many lives that have been displaced as a result of the war,” they said.

“So I thought, ‘I really want to help out and I want to do my bit and I want to try and raise some money to help those individuals’.”

The organiser said they want to stay anonymous to keep the “mystique” around the statue, with a further explanation about how it came to be in the village just outside [*Birmingham*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/birmingham) to be revealed in the coming days.

Describing how the artwork was made, they said: “I don’t know what the material is but I gave to a couple of artists and they cut it out over two or three weeks.

“Then we painted it and made a plinth, which obviously had the sign Bellend of the Year just to make sure there was absolutely no way to deny what he actually was.

“The message is pretty simple – it’s exactly what it says on the tin.”

**Load-Date:** December 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainians returning to war-torn country due to unaffordable UK homes, MPs told*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67SD-9311-DY4H-K0H1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2023 Tuesday 7:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 706 words

**Byline:** Richard Wheeler

**Highlight:** Conservative MP Bob Blackman raised concerns on behalf of refugees who fled to the UK.

**Body**

***Ukrainian refugees*** have been forced to return to the war-torn country as homes in the UK are unaffordable, [*MPs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mps) have heard.

Concerns were also raised that hundreds more Ukrainian households in England are at risk of needing support for being homeless.

The House of Commons approved a non-binding motion which called on the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) to work with partner organisations and local authorities to ensure refugees facing and experiencing homelessness are supported during their time living in the UK.

Because homes are currently unaffordable in the UK, some of my friends have been forced to leave and return to dangerous places in Ukraine with their children.

The words of a Ukrainian refugee

[*Conservative*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/conservative) MP [*Bob Blackman*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bob-blackman) (Harrow East) shared testimony from refugees in the UK, including a British citizen from Ukraine who said: “I’ve been struggling to support my mum through the Ukraine family scheme since she was forced to flee in March last year.

“Despite her age and very dangerous heart condition, my 66-year-old mother has been sleeping in the kitchen of my flat for nearly a year because there are no affordable private rented properties in our area and the council has failed to house her.”

MPs heard a “tiny room” to rent in their area was a minimum of £450-a-month, but the housing benefit her mother qualified for was around £260.

Mr Blackman also highlighted the remarks of another woman, who said: “Because homes are currently unaffordable in the UK, some of my friends have been forced to leave and return to dangerous places in Ukraine with their children.

“But I’m from Kherson and our city is being bombed every day. I’m homeless in Ukraine and I’m soon to be homeless here.”

The MP earlier raised figures that showed 4,630 Ukrainian households received “urgent homelessness assistance” from their local authority in England between February 2022 and February 2023.

He added 1,216 refugees have presented themselves as homeless in London, but noted these figures raised were only a “partial picture of the true scale of homelessness faced by this refugee community”.

Mr Blackman explained the statistics are those voluntarily supplied by “just under 69% of all English local authorities”, adding: “This means 97 local authorities did not submit data for the collection and so we predict the total number of refugees seeking assistance to be much higher.”

Communities minister Felicity Buchan said Ukrainians who arrive in the country are eligible for work, education, benefits and support as soon as they arrive in the country.

She added: “I’m alive to these issues. I’m alive to the fact that a lot of Ukrainians would like to have their own home so I’m working with local authorities, with the National Residential Landlord Association to really focus on how we can overcome barriers.”

Ahead of the debate, Housing Secretary [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) praised people who have hosted ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the year since a special visa scheme launched.

In a video to mark 12 months since the announcement of the Homes for Ukraine scheme, Mr Gove encouraged more people to get involved in “showing Britain at its best”.

Thousands of people have opened their homes to those fleeing the war in Ukraine, but the people of Ukraine still need you.Could you become a host?Register your interest today:[*https://t.co/ac6ZR9M8Y1*](https://t.co/ac6ZR9M8Y1) [*#StandwithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#HomesforUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/HomesForUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/ZYUcsdz8DP*](https://t.co/ZYUcsdz8DP) — Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (@luhc) [*March 14, 2023*](https://twitter.com/luhc/status/1635581963061850113?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Mr Gove said ***Ukrainian refugees*** had been “taken into the hearts and the homes of people who have been so generous in offering support to those fleeing persecution”.

Elsewhere in the Commons, MPs urged the Government to “get serious” about enforcing sanctions against Russian oligarchs in the UK.

Labour former minister Liam Byrne said he had discovered there were 147 reports of a breach of the sanctions regime in 2022, after requesting information from the Treasury’s Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation.

He added: “There have been the grand total of two monetary fines, both to fintech companies.”

The Commons supported a non-binding motion calling on the Government to lay before Parliament for Russian state assets to be seized and used to help rebuild Ukraine.

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2023

**End of Document**



[*'We're not allowed to bring our baby girl from Ukraine'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C15-6JD1-JCS0-D00P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

May 13, 2024 Monday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 7

**Length:** 979 words

**Byline:** ANDY GREGORY

**Body**

A Ukrainian refugee couple who fled to the UK have been refused permission for their two-year-old daughter to join them after the government suddenly changed its sponsorship rules, The Independent can reveal.

Oleksandra and Yaroslav were offered shelter from Russia's war under the Homes for Ukraine scheme in April 2022, leaving newborn Anna with her grandparents in Kyiv until they were settled in the UK with work and their own home.

But after finally overcoming the hurdles of finding accommodation and setting up their own marketing business in the UK, the couple's submission in April for their daughter, now a toddler, to join them was refused by the Home Office, after rules for the schemes allowing Ukrainians to do so were tightened overnight in February.

"Now it seems like it's impossible to bring Anna," Oleksandra told The Independent. "I was almost there - and I wasn't expecting [the legislation] to change. I'm very sad and frustrated, I don't know what to do and how to react. If I am not able to bring Anna, we will be forced to leave everything and go somewhere else.

"I spent a lot of time building up the business, finding proper accommodation, and when we came here we didn't have anything - our business in Ukraine was closed and we didn't have any money. So it's not a good situation."

Despite the Home Office insisting that the new rules do not prevent children from joining their parents, charities warn the changes have created "unintended consequences" and could leave hundreds - if not thousands- of Ukrainians separated from their loved ones.

The "deeply shocking" failure "betrays our commitment to Ukrainians", warned Labour peer Alf Dubs, who himself arrived in the UK as a six-year-old fleeing the Nazis.

"We pay lip service to how much we want to help Ukraine and the Ukrainians, then in practice we don't do it," Lord Dubs told The Independent. "The most fundamental thing is, parents should be allowed to have their children with them - absolutely fundamental- and I think the government should be ashamed of itself."

Lib Dem MP Alistair Carmichael said: "I struggle to decide what is most offensive about this case - the cruelty or the incompetence. These are both the defining characteristics of this Conservative Home Office. The fact that they do not seem to understand their own rules tells you all you need to know."

While previously ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** could sponsor family members, now only British and Irish citizens or those with permanent leave to remain can do so. Announcing the changes on 19 February, the government said it had eschewed the typical implementation period of 21 days to avoid a "misplaced surge of applications".

Approached about Anna's case by The Independent, the Home Office said: "We absolutely do not prevent a parent being joined by a child in the UK. The Ukraine scheme rules have never prevented this, nor do the changes prevent this."

But despite their application for Anna stating that they are her parents, Oleksandra and Yaroslav received a refusal letter 11 days later, on 26 April, that said Anna was not eligible because - as per the new rules - her "sponsor does not meet the requirement that they must be a British or Irish citizen or have no time limit on their stay in the UK".

"I don't know how to react - it's very, very sad and depressing," said Oleksandra. "I was crying when I saw [the letter] because I expected they would personally look at the situation and let Anna in because we are her parents."

Naqeeb Sadiq, a senior immigration adviser at the charity Settled, which helped with Anna's visa application, said he fears that the new legislation - which served to close the Ukraine Family scheme, and tighten the rules relating to both the Homes for Ukraine and Ukraine Extension schemes - may have created "unintended consequences" and be keeping families apart.

"Earlier in the scheme, the government had to make amendments to the policy because of issues relating to minors - that was within six months of the scheme being announced," said Mr Sadiq. "So it may be the case that they've just overlooked it again."

Warning that hundreds if not thousands of families could potentially be affected, Settled's Ukraine schemes adviser Yuliia Ismail said: "Generally for Ukrainians, it's quite typical, sometimes, to leave children in Ukraine or somewhere else with relatives before coming to the UK to get settled, because it's so difficult for them to get private rented accommodation."

As more families find their feet in Britain, Ms Ismail warned that Settled is among several organisations now seeing a rising number of cases similar to Anna's. Oleksandra added: "I'm not alone - I know for sure, I have friends here in a similar situation. Nobody expected this."

Urging the Home Office to grant young children visas in cases like this, the charity's chief executive Kate Smart said: "This rule change, introduced with no warning, puts this family in a terrible position. Children in Ukraine's war zones belong with their parents, safe in the UK."

Agreeing that the new policy has left ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** with no way to bring their children, partners or family members to Britain, the Refugee Council also urged ministers to allow Ukrainians with temporary status in the UK to sponsor their close family members.

"Until they do, Ukrainians who have already suffered so much are being stopped from being with their loved ones and rebuilding their lives," he said.

Insisting that their rules do not prevent children from joining their parents, a Home Office spokesperson added: "We continue to provide a safe and secure haven for those fleeing the ongoing conflict, whilst providing certainty and assurance for Ukrainians in the UK on their future as the war continues."

If you are affected by these issues, the charity Settled gives free accredited advice in Ukrainian, at [*ukraineadvice@settled.org.uk*](mailto:ukraineadvice@settled.org.uk)

**Load-Date:** May 12, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Ben Whishaw and Maisie Williams read poetry to raise money for Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6529-7NW1-DY4H-K2CP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 22, 2022 Tuesday 10:10 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 248 words

**Byline:** Laura Parnaby

**Highlight:** The film and television stars read emotional passages to thousands of people at the Royal Festival Hall in London.

**Body**

Actors [*Ben Whishaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ben-whishaw) and [*Maisie Williams*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/maisie-williams) have given sombre readings of translated Ukrainian poetry at a live event raising money for the besieged country.

Dressed in black against blue and yellow backlights, the film and television stars read emotional passages to thousands of people at the [*Royal Festival Hall*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/royal-festival-hall) in the Southbank Centre in [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london) on Tuesday.

The event, called Slava Ukraini, meaning glory to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , is raising money for the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) appeal providing aid to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Whishaw and Williams took to the stage following classical performances of Ukrainian folk music sung by Kseniia Nikolaieva and pianist Dinara Klinton.

Bafta-winning Whishaw read Dancing In Odessa and A Cigarette by Ukrainian writer Ilya Kaminsky, while Game Of Thrones actor Williams gave an emotional account of a woman fleeing Kyiv.

Juliet Stevenson, who has welcomed a family of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** into her home, Jonathan Pryce and Kyiv-born baritone and principal artist for the Royal Opera House Yuriy Yurchuk will also perform.

The event marks day 27 of Russian president Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

Slava Ukraini has been organised in partnership with the Ukrainian Institute in London and is supported by the British Council.

The DEC brings together 15 of the UK's leading aid charities, including British Red Cross, Oxfam UK and Save The Children UK, who are working on the ground in Ukraine and at the country's borders to help those fleeing the conflict.

**Load-Date:** March 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Paloma Faith inspired by Ukrainian women ‘holding the fort’ during Russian war*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67N5-7TH1-DY4H-K39N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 27, 2023 Monday 10:15 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 669 words

**Byline:** Ellie Iorizzo

**Highlight:** The 41-year-old singer met refugees in Warsaw a year after the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

**Body**

[*Paloma Faith*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/paloma-faith) has said the strength and optimism shown by mothers forced to flee Ukraine is “testament to the human condition”.

The 41-year-old singer visited projects supporting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, funded by donations from the [*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) public through the Disasters Emergency Committee’s (DEC) Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal.

To mark a year since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Faith travelled to the Polish capital [*Warsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warsaw) to see how donations to the appeal have been put to use.

'I met one woman who had to come alone with her 6 children across the border.'[*@Palomafaith*](https://twitter.com/Palomafaith?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) talks about her experience meeting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Poland one year on from the Russian invasion of Ukraine. [*pic.twitter.com/yeqLXhLlE8*](https://t.co/yeqLXhLlE8) — Good Morning Britain (@GMB) [*February 27, 2023*](https://twitter.com/GMB/status/1630130286129192961?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Appearing on Good Morning Britain, she said: “I met one woman who had to come alone with her six children across the border and then she arrived in Poland with six kids and felt completely unable to cope.

“And in order to get her husband to reunite with her she had to take all six kids back and slept for three nights in tents because the newborn didn’t have papers yet.

“But what was really kind of amazing was her optimism and her vibrancy and strength, and I felt like it was such a testament to the human condition to be around these women that are really holding the fort.

“I just felt really moved by what these woman are capable of doing. As a mother-of-two I know how difficult it is to have children but with all of that on top of it.”

The British singer previously said she had been touched by how a heart-breaking humanitarian situation sparked a “human chain of kindness across borders”.

She said: “From the British public donating to the appeal, to local people in Poland using those funds to support refugees, to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** volunteering to help fellow refugees, to children helping their mothers cope in the absence of fathers and extended families.

“I only hope this level of kindness will continue and be extended to other refugees facing the same issues across the globe, be it conflict or environmental disasters.

“After all, we are all connected.”

Faith performed at the Concert for Ukraine in Birmingham last year alongside the likes of Ed Sheeran and Camila Cabello.

The event, which was broadcast on ITV, has raised more than £13.4 million for the humanitarian effort in the war-torn nation.

During a three-day visit to Warsaw, Faith visited a number of different DEC-funded projects, including a refugee centre supporting mothers who had been forced to flee Ukraine with their children, and a Ukrainian school set up for refugee children to learn in their native language.

She said: “It was so moving speaking to young mothers who have fled Ukraine.

“They had all made the difficult journey to Poland alone with their children, some of them crossing the border while they were pregnant.

“I met one woman, [*Emma*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/emma) , with a tiny baby and two other children and I could remember that feeling of trying to cope, trying to juggle everything.

“As a mother, all you want is for your children to be OK, to be happy and safe above all else – and you feel the pressure to make the best choices for them.

“Those women have had to make choices that no-one should ever have to.”

Faith is among a number of high-profile figures to have travelled to Ukraine and Poland to meet refugees since the outbreak of the conflict last February.

In June, American actor and producer Ben Stiller visited Ukraine, where he met President [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) and Ukrainian citizens as part of his role as a goodwill ambassador for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Oscar-winning American actor Sean Penn also spent time with Ukrainian people and Mr Zelensky during a trip to create a documentary about the Russian invasion.

Faith added: “Many families came to Poland expecting to be here only for a short period, but one year on from the start of the conflict, people are struggling with the reality of living in limbo for such a long time.”

**Load-Date:** February 27, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Cameron heads to Ukraine in foreign secretary debut*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69N6-J7H1-F072-44B4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

November 17, 2023 Friday

First Edition

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**Section:** WORLD; Pg. 16

**Length:** 669 words

**Byline:** ARCHIE MITCHELL POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

David Cameron has visited Volodymyr Zelensky in Ukraine in his first overseas trip as foreign secretary. The former prime minister joked about his "disagreements" with Boris Johnson, but said support for the Ukrainian president was "the finest thing" his government did.

And Lord Cameron promised Britain would maintain "moral, diplomatic, economic and military support" to the war-torn country "for however long it takes". In a video of the meeting in Odesa, shared by president Zelensky, Mr Cameron said: "I had some disagreements with my friend Boris Johnson, and we have known each other for 40 years, and his support for you was the finest thing that he and his government did."

The newly-appointed foreign secretary added: "I wanted this to be my first visit. Personally, I admire the strength and determination of the Ukrainian people," he continued. "And what I want to say by being here is we will continue to give you the moral support, the diplomatic support the economic support, but above all themilitary support, not just this year and next year, but for however long it takes."

Ukraine's president said the pair discussed the supply of weapons for his forces fighting against the Russian invasion when they met in Kyiv. Mr Zelensky said: "We had a good meeting focused on weapons for the frontline, strengthening air defence, and protecting our people and critical infrastructure. I am grateful to the UK for its support!"

Lord Cameron, the former prime minister, became foreign secretary on Monday and the early visit to Ukraine will be intended to demonstrate Britain's continued support. His predecessor, James Cleverly, had been scheduled to make the visit before being moved to the Home Office in Monday's reshuffle.

Mr Johnson, Lord Cameron's long-time rival, was a steadfast supporter of Ukraine, striking up a close relationship with president Zelensky after Russia's invasion. Lord Cameron is the first British minister to travel to the Black Sea port city since the war began. It has come under fire since Russia declined to renew a grain export deal with Ukraine in August.

However, a new corridor in the Black Sea, close to the shoreline, has allowed 91 ships to export cargo. "In the last three months, Ukraine has made remarkable progress in the Black Sea to drive the Russian Navy eastwards and open critical export corridors for Ukraine's economy and global food supplies," Lord Cameron said.

Meanwhile, a campaigner and host for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** has voiced concerns after a government minister declined to rule out visa fees for those who have fled to the UK amid the ongoing war. The first visas issued as part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme, launched last year following the Russian invasion, will expire in March 2025.

In a written response to a question in parliament, immigration minister Robert Jenrick said: "We keep the need for a possible extension of UK sanctuary, beyond March 2025, under consistent review. This includes whether to require a fee."

Kitty Hamilton, co-founder of the advocacy group Vigil for Visas, who has hosted a number of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, said: "They are not here because they want to be, they are here because there is a war in their country and they can't go back yet. It seems unfair to add to this insecurity with a lack of clarity on whether our guests can stay here in the UK."

Finland closed four crossing points on its long border with Russia to stop the flow of Middle Eastern and African migrants that it accuses Moscow of ushering to the border in recent months. Finnish authorities say Russia has started allowing undocumented travellers to access border zones and enter crossing points where they can request asylum in Finland.

Separately, Washington imposed sanctions on 10 individuals in the western Balkans in a bid to contain Russian influence there. They include Savo Cvijetinovic, a senior official of the political party led by Milorad Dodik, the pro-Russia leader of Republika Srpska, the Serb-dominated half of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Load-Date:** November 16, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Billions more to be cut from foreign aid, charity warns*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6689-BYH1-F072-44C2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

August 29, 2022 Monday

Second Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 3

**Length:** 867 words

**Byline:** ROB MERRICK DEPUTY POLITICAL EDITOR

**Body**

Billions more will be slashed from overseas aid projects within weeks unless ministers abandon rules diverting a quarter of funds to the costs of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the UK, Save the Children is warning.

The alarm has been raised over a controversial decision to include spending on 118,000 Ukrainians welcomed to Britain within a budget reduced from 0.7 to 0.5 per cent of GDP and then strictly capped.

As the war grinds on, Save the Children estimates the bill will reach £3bn, which would be 25 per cent of aid spending in 2022, after £4bn has already been slashed from the budget.

The agency welcomes the help for refugees fleeing the invasion, but told The Independent there would be "unimaginable consequences" without an urgent rethink.

"Including those costs within a 0.5 per cent aid budget, which is already fully allocated, will result in further deep cuts in funding for those in the toughest circumstances across the world," said Richard Watts, senior adviser on development finance.

"This isn't right. The UK government should ensure its help for refugees here does not come at the expense of support for children across the world at this critical time.It can and must step up, and not back."

Ministers have already ordered a stop to "non-essential" aid spending - partly because of the ballooning Ukraine costs - with agencies still in the dark over existing projects, with just four months left in the calendar year.

The Independent understands that Liz Truss is on course to break a government pledge to restore the 0.7 per cent aid commitment in 2024, because of her planned £30bn-plus tax cuts that will benefit the wealthy.

The government revealed only in late July that spending on ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** would count as official development assistance (ODA) within the 0.5 per cent cap.

This followed a cabinet tussle in which Ms Truss, the foreign secretary, lost out to home secretary Priti Patel, who is believed to have asked for cash to come from the aid budget.

There is also anger that donations of leftover Covid vaccines are also being counted as foreign aid, slashing an estimated further £300m from this year's aid spending.

Mr Watts added: "Liz Truss raised concernsabout the impact of the Ukraine war on her aid budget and hoped the Treasury would allocate additional funding. If she is the next prime minister, she will be in a position to make that change."

Sarah Champion, chair of the House of Commons international development committee, said: "It's absolutely right that we step up to help the people of Ukraine, but we mustn't abandon our commitment to the world's poorest in doing so.

"We must show flexibility in increasing the 0.5 per cent target before the costs of providing much-needed help to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** lead to cuts that will cause real suffering elsewhere."

And Preet Kaur Gill, Labour's shadow minister for international development, said: "The UK is rightly united in supporting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing Putin's barbaric and illegal war.

"But diverting aid from the world's worst crises in a global emergency drives insecurity, extremism and people to flee their homes - leaving the UK exposed and the world less safe."

However, Ms Truss is poised to win the Tory leadership race on a pledge of substantial tax cuts and must also find a way to bail out households and industry faced with rocketing energy bills.

The Conservatives broke their own manifesto commitment by slashing aid spending from 0.7 per cent of national income, despite a legal commitment to allocate that amount.

The cut was forced through despite warnings that huge numbers of people would die as a result, and it was done in a chaotic fashion in the rush to find immediate savings.

Under pressure, Rishi Sunak, chancellor at the time, promised the 0.7 per cent would be restored in 2024, provided Treasury rules were met, namely no borrowing for day-to-day spending and that debt was falling.

But the Institute for Fiscal Studies, which has attacked Ms Truss's plans as unrealistic without big spending cuts, is warning that they also have stark implications for aid spending.

Ben Zaranko, a senior research economist at the IFS, warned: "Implementing a large package of tax cuts without accompanying spending cuts would act to push up borrowing.

"If, as seems all too possible, the government was then on track to breach its fiscal rules by a wide margin, that would cast doubt on whether aid spending would still return to 0.7 per cent of GDP by 2024."

Mr Zaranko pointed out that Ms Truss has hinted at adopting fresh fiscal rules, but she has said nothing about restoring overseas aid during the campaign.

Save the Children expects 190,000 Ukrainians to arrive this year, putting the costs as follows: payments to local authorities (£1.5bn), accommodation (£400m), cash support (£375m), health costs (£500m), education costs (£300m) - just over £3bn in total.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office pointed to the rules "on what constitutes aid", set out by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

"Support given to asylum seekers or refugees for the first 12 months of their stay in the UK, who originate from eligible countries, counts as aid," a spokesperson said.

**Load-Date:** August 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Billions more to be cut from foreign aid, charity warns*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6689-BYH1-F072-449D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

August 29, 2022 Monday

First Edition

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**Length:** 869 words

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**Load-Date:** August 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Germany 'evicting' Afghan refugees to accommodate people fleeing Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:659Y-BV31-DY4H-K3B3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 27, 2022 Wednesday 6:27 PM GMT

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**Section:** WORLD,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:1

**Length:** 537 words

**Byline:** Thomas Kingsley

**Highlight:** Hundreds of Afghan families have reportedly been evicted in Berlin to make way for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***

**Body**

[*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) has displaced [*Afghan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/afghan) [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) from government accommodation to make way for Ukrainians fleeing [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's invasion, according to reports.

Hundreds of Afghan families are being evicted in [*Berlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/berlin) to create space for incoming refugees fleeing [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , Foreign Policy reported. The German government justified it by saying that Afghans were being removed from "arrival centres" designed for short term stays.

However, activists said that some refugees had been evicted from the accommodation they had lived in for years.

"The evictions purposefully weren't publicised," said Tareq Alaows, a board member of the Berlin Refugee Council.

"Some people had lived in their homes for years and were ripped out of their social structures, including children who were moved to locations far from their respective schools."

"Few people's living conditions improved, but most were afraid to speak up, afraid it could impact their immigration status," Mr Alaows told Foreign Policy, explaining that around 10 residences had been emptied in Berlin.

Berlin's senate department for integration, labour and social services, which oversees the housing of refugees, said that the decision was "based on operationally necessary and difficult considerations" and that there was no alternative because Ukrainians, including many women with children, needed a roof over their heads and a bed.

"We regret that this caused additional hardships to the Afghan families [and that] the affected people had to move out of their familiar surroundings and now possibly have to keep up with their social connections with great difficulty," said Stefan Strauss, the department's press secretary.

Mr Strauss said Berlin had a total of 83 different accommodations for refugees, already housing some 22,000 people, but that arriving Ukrainians needed to be consolidated to a few defined arrival centers to simplify processing. Evicted Afghans were given other "permanent" accommodation of equivalent quality, excluding shared bathrooms and kitchens, he added.

Mr Alaows of the Berlin Refugee Council said that although the fault is not with the ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, there was a difference between how they have been treated compared to Afghans fleeing home.

"The last months showed that different treatment of refugees is possible, and this needs to be systematically anchored in our society," Mr Alaows said.

More than 160,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have been officially registered in Germany, but their real numbers are thought to be much higher as Ukrainians can enter Germany without visas and there are no thorough controls along the Polish-German border.

Berlin has become the main gateway for tens of thousands of refugees, with around 7,500 arriving at the train station every day after the invasion began on 24 February. Because city officials were initially slow to react to the massive influx, thousands of volunteers have stepped up to help cater to refugees.

In the last 10 years, around 630,000 Afghans applied for asylum in EU countries with some of the highest figures in Germany, while in 2015 the nation agreed to take in 500,000 Syrian refugees a year.

The Independent has approached the German interior office for further comment.

**Load-Date:** April 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Germany 'evicting' Afghan refugees to accommodate people fleeing Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:659P-WVK1-JBNF-W4W3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 26, 2022 Tuesday 3:26 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 537 words

**Byline:** Thomas Kingsley

**Highlight:** Hundreds of Afghan families have reportedly been evicted in Berlin to make way for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***

**Body**

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The Independent has approached the German interior office for further comment.

**Load-Date:** April 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Russian citizen arrested on suspicion of stabbing Ukraine soldiers to death in Germany*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BX7-FPV1-JBNF-W2H5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 29, 2024 Monday 1:51 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 383 words

**Byline:** Rich Booth

**Highlight:** According to an initial investigation the three men knew each other

**Body**

German prosecutors have said that they had launched an investigation into a Russian citizen arrested on suspicion of stabbing two [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) [*soldiers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/soldiers) to death in southern [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) over the weekend.

The soldiers -who had been convalescing in southern Germany -were found with serious stab wounds outside a shopping centre in the Bavarian town of Murnau am See on Sunday, according to [*police*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/police). One of them, aged 36, died at the scene, while the other, 23, succumbed to his wounds in hospital.

A 57-year-old Russian citizen was arrested in his home shortly after the act on suspicion of murder, police said.

According to an initial investigation, the three men knew each other, but further details need to be verified, local police spokesperson Stefan Sonntag told dpa. There were also indications that all three men had consumed alcohol.

The prosecutor general’s office in Munich said it had since taken over the case and was not able to rule out a political motivation on the part of the alleged perpetrator.

Ukrainian consuls are clarifying information about the units in which the victims served and establishing contact with their families, the Ukrainian government said in a statement.

Ukraine’s Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba instructed the consulate general in Munich to keep an eye on the case and remain in contact with German law enforcement, it said.

“We have clear evidence that the suspect was under the influence of alcohol,” Sonntag was quoted as saying. A spokesperson for German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Monday expressed concern about the killings.

“This is a worrying incident, no question about it. The circumstances must now be investigated more closely,” Steffen Hebestreit told reporters in Berlin.

“We can only speculate about the motives at the moment,” he added.

“But it is clear that we cannot tolerate such a thing on German soil anyway and that the Ukrainians, Ukrainians who have fled to us from the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine, must now be safe.”

More than 1 million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have come to Germany since Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Germany is also home to a significant Russian immigrant community and 2.5 million Russians of German ancestry who mostly moved to the country after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s.

**Load-Date:** April 29, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine refugee hosts are struggling with rising costs*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:664F-WKK1-F072-439V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

August 11, 2022 Thursday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 7

**Length:** 831 words

**Byline:** HOLLY BANCROFT

**Body**

Almost a third of current and previous Homes for Ukraine hosts have reported struggling with the rising cost of living, according to the first survey by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) of those taking part in the scheme. Responding to the report, campaigners warned that ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are at "risk of homelessness" because of problems with their housing arrangements.

Some 21 percent of sponsors reported that the soaring cost of living was affecting their ability to provide support to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** "quite a lot". A further 9 per cent said it affected their ability to help "very much". A further 41 per cent said that rising living costs had affected their ability to provide support "a little".

The CEO of Refugee Council, Enver Solomon, said that the "additional burden of cost of living on families here in the UK poses a further threat to vulnerable Ukrainians".

The Local Government Association called on ministers to increase the £350 a month "thank you payment" given to hosts "so sponsors can be sure it's not costing them". Cllr James Jamieson warned that, as the six-month initial placement period ends, "there is a significant risk that - even if rematching is available - many Ukrainian families may need to present as homeless because of a lack of sponsors or other options".

The survey, which received responses from 17,702 people, found that some sponsors have had to leave the Homes for Ukraine scheme because they can no longer afford to take part in it. Of the hosts who signed up to house Ukrainians for six months or less, 23 per cent said they did not plan to continue because of the rising cost of living or because they could no longer afford to do so.

Mr Solomon said that the organisation is "already aware of hundreds of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, predominantly women and children, at risk of homelessness". This is for a range of reasons, including a breakdown in relations between the host and the guests. "We welcomed the fact that thousands of British people came forward to open their homes, however these hosting arrangements were always going to encounter challenges in the long term," he said.

Almost one in five, or 19 per cent, of people told the ONS that they had intended to provide accommodation for six months rather than for a longer period of time. The most common reason for stopping, given by 58 per cent, was having only intended to provide short-term accommodation.

It comes as Money Saving Expert founder Martin Lewis hit out at Conservative leadership candidate Liz Truss's proposed economic policies, calling them "a sticking plaster on a gaping wound". He warned that soaring energy bills are a "national crisis" that will leave millions "destitute" this winter unless the government urgently steps in to help.

Almost all current or previous Homes for Ukraine sponsors who responded to the ONS survey - 99 per cent - said that they had incurred additional costs as a result of hosting Ukrainians. In particular, 91 per cent reported an increase in the amount they had to pay for utilities, such as water, gas and electricity.

Most of the hosts had welcomed ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** into their own homes, rather than a spare or rented property, and most sponsors had met their guests on social media. A significant proportion of sponsors were working full-time while hosting, with 43 per cent of respondents in this position, whereas just over one-fifth of people, 21 per cent, were retired. A slight majority of hosts (56 per cent) were female.

When asked about the challenges of hosting, the most commonly reported issue was helping guests apply to get benefits, with 53 per cent of sponsors finding this difficult.

Commenting on the findings, Tim Gibbs of the ONS said: "As we come up to the sixth month since the Homes for Ukraine scheme was introduced, it is useful to find out what the experience of hosts has been. We see a lot of generosity and goodwill in what hosts report doing for their guests.

"The majority are still hosting, and many indicate a willingness to host beyond the initial six months. However, we also see the additional work and expense involved in hosting, with some saying more or ongoing support would be welcomed."

Many of those surveyed, 23 per cent, said they intended to provide accommodation for longer than 12 months. They also said they provided a lot of extra help to families, such as showing them the local area. More than 43,000 sponsors were invited to take part in the ONS research.

Last week The Independent reported that a Ukrainian family who had been kicked out of their home weeks after arriving in the UK had been helped by a good samaritan. Maxim and Olga Hyryk had been living in fear that they could be made homeless after their landlords in Fareham, Hampshire suddenly told them to leave. The family had fled Russia's invasion and come to the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

A British midwife has now offered the family of nine a house, which she was using as a holiday let, rent-free.

**Load-Date:** August 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Patel apologises for delay in processing Ukraine visas*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6561-GV21-F072-423X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

April 9, 2022 Saturday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 9

**Length:** 521 words

**Byline:** ADAM FORREST, MAY BULMAN

**Body**

Home secretary Priti Patel has apologised "with frustration" over the time it is taking for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to arrive in the UK under visa schemes. However, she denied claims that visa requirements are causing unnecessary delays, insisting the UK will "absolutely see changes in numbers" as work continues.

The latest Home Office figures showed that only 1,200 people fleeing the Russian forces had made it to the UK as part of the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme. MsPatelsaid: "I apologise with frustration myself ... it takes time to start up a new route."

She said it was "always easy to blame someone else" - but insisted that visa system security checks "are not the problem" when it comes to the time it is taking for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to reach the UK. Around 12,000 people had arrived in the UK under Ukraine visa schemes, according to the latest Home Office figures - with the majority coming under the family scheme available to those with relatives in Britain.

But less than 3 per cent of the 43,600 Ukrainians who have applied to come under the Homes forUkraine sponsorship scheme have been able to arrive in Britain since the route opened three weeks ago. Around 200,000 Britons have registered to host ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** under the route, but complex applications forms, difficulty finding matches and lengthy delays are slowing down the process.

Yvette Cooper MP,shadow home secretary,said the latest figures were "scandalous and shameful", adding: "Over thirty thousand people with British sponsors waiting are still stuck in limbo - around half of whom have been waiting more than ten days already to hear anything." She added: "British families have offered Ukrainians sanctuary in their hour of need, but the home secretary is letting everyone down."

Asked about the "huge frustration" among members of the public experiencing three to four week delays in being able to put people up, MsPatelsaid: "They're not seeing delays." The home secretary said security checks needed under the Home Office's visa system were "not the problem" and were "not slowing the process up".

She added: "We are processing and, as I've said as well, I'm streamlining processes. I streamlined the family scheme in less than a week, and we simplified that and we changed the way certain checks are done. Also, I'm working to automate where we can."

The Refugee Council accused ministers of "choosing control over compassion" by insisting on visa requirements which EU countries have dropped. Chief executiveEnverSolomon said Britons who are prepared to open up their homes have been left feeling "angry and frustrated that their gesture of support has been lost into a web of bureaucracy and chaos". He added: "It's clear that the visa schemes which were supposedly designed to ensure the safety of Ukrainians fleeing war and bloodshed are unfit for purpose."

Liberal Democrat leader Sir Ed Davey has called for the home secretary to resign over her "failure" to help those fleeing. "We want to offer Ukrainians a home, but Priti Patel has slammed the door in their face," Sir Ed tweeted. "An apology isn't enough. She must resign."

**Load-Date:** April 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Dating ads offering chance to meet ‘lonely’ Ukrainian women is banned*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65X8-7PS1-JBNF-W32T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 13, 2022 Wednesday 12:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 340 words

**Byline:** Josie Clarke

**Highlight:** The three ads for SofiaDate appeared as the UK Government launched a scheme to encourage the public to house ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

**Body**

Online dating ads offering the chance to meet “lonely” Ukrainian women have been banned for causing serious offence.

The three ads for SofiaDate, seen in May as the [*UK Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk-government) launched a scheme to encourage the public to house ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, connected the women’s vulnerability to their sex appeal, the [*Advertising Standards Authority*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/advertising-standards-authority) (ASA) said.

The first ad, seen on the Dorset Echo’s website, featured an image of a woman on a balcony and stated: “[*Ukranian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukranian) [sic] Women. Meet Thousands of Lonely Ukrainian Women. Forget About [*Loneliness*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/loneliness). Let Yourself be Happy.”

The second and third ads, both seen on Scottish newspaper The National’s website, featured images of women and said: “Ukranian [sic] Women” and “Connecting Singles Across the [*World*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/world) to Their Ideal Partner … ”

Three complaints lodged with the ASA said the ads were inappropriate and offensive in the context of the war in Ukraine.

Astrasoft Projects, trading as SofiaDate, said it had removed the ads.

The National and Newsquest Media Group, trading as Dorset Echo, said the ads were “ostensibly conventional dating ads, although potentially clumsily sexist in their portrayal of women from a male perspective”.

They argued the ads did not refer to the war in Ukraine, were not partisan, and were also not unsympathetic towards Ukrainian women or the Ukrainian people in general.

However, they said that on reflection they could be inconsistent with their policy of refusing ads for prostitution and trafficking, and confirmed they had since been removed.

Upholding the complaints, the ASA said the women depicted in the ads were shown in a way that was, at least partly, designed to titillate readers, with the models dressed in low-cut and body-hugging clothing.

The watchdog said: “We considered the ads’ focus on Ukrainian women dressed in the aforementioned manner, as well references to their loneliness, had the effect of highlighting their vulnerability and connecting it to their sexual appeal.

“For that reason, we concluded the ads were likely to cause serious offence.”

**Load-Date:** July 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*New refugee scheme poses slavery threat, say charities*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650P-PG01-JCS0-D07Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 15, 2022 Tuesday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 5

**Length:** 581 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

Ministers have been warned that ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** could be placed at risk of exploitation and abuse under its new sponsorship scheme launched yesterday by Michael Gove.

Anti-trafficking charities say "red flags could be missed" in the vetting of potential hosts under the new programme, which will see people in the UK paid £350 per month to host refugees who have fled the Russian invasion.

Experts said they were "certain" that some people in the UK will view the scheme as an "opportunity to turn a profit at the expense of vulnerable individuals" - and that thorough checks must be carried out.

Over 20,000 Britons have registered their their interest in sponsoring ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to stay in their homes within hours of the government website going live, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities said.

But campaigners urged caution over the scheme, warning that vulnerable people could end up being exploited by those who have offered to host them unless the government commits to "rigorous" safeguarding measures, including follow-up checks.

Lauren Agnew, human trafficking policy expert at Care (Christian Action Research and Education), said that while the scheme was "well-motivated and could benefit a great number of individuals", the logistics of it had to be "weighed carefully".

She continued: "With large numbers of applications needing to be processed quickly, red flags could be missed in the vetting of potential hosts. We can be certain that some of this number will be seeing the Homes for Ukraine scheme as an opportunity to turn a profit at the expense of vulnerable individuals seeking refuge in the UK.

"Setting refugees up in homes around the UK is not the end of the story. There must be follow-up checks to ensure these individuals are not being exploited. We must remember that refugees are extremely vulnerable. They must not be allowed to fall off the radar."

Daniel Sohege, director of pro-bono consultancy Stand For All, said the new scheme raised "a number of concerns" with the scheme, with the most significant risk being that it "increases the danger of refugees being exploited and even trafficked".

"We already see how a failure to provide proper specialist support puts, particularly children, at risk in hotels. This seems to multiply the issue," he said. "Organisations that currently 'match' refugees to potential homes conduct multiple checks. The speed and scale of this scheme means it is nigh on impossible to properly carry out those checks."

Recent statistics from the National Crime Agency estimate there are at least 6,000-8,000 modern slavery offenders in the UK. The government has said each host will be checked against the police national computer for security concerns, and that refugees will be registered with GPs and schools, where safeguarding checks will be carried out.

The Independent understands that the new scheme will require all hosts to put forward the names of refugees they can sponsor, and is anticipating that charities will come forward and offer to facilitate the matching process.

Charities have warned that the need to put forward names could lead to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** without links to the UK being "excluded" from the programme.

The Home Office's Ukraine family scheme - a separate route which launched on 4 March - has so far issued 4,400 visas out of 32,400 applications that have been opened, meaning the UK is falling far short of the numbers of Ukrainians that other European countries have welcomed.

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Enter Shikari's Rou Reynolds calls out UK government's response to Ukrainian refugee crisis*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WB-78G1-JBNF-W1R0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 27, 2022 Sunday 12:29 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,MUSIC,CULTURE; Version:1

**Length:** 560 words

**Byline:** Maanya Sachdeva

**Highlight:** 'Support the wealthy. Abandon the struggling. Tories are consistent at least,' Reynolds wrote on Twitter

**Body**

[*Enter Shikari*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/enter-shikari) frontman [*Rou Reynolds*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rou-reynolds) has called out the [*UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk) government's response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis on Twitter.

On Friday (25 February), it was reported that [*the UK has stopped accepting visa applications from Ukrainian nationals*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-war-refugees-uk-visas-b2022567.html) stranded in the country that is currently fighting against Russian invasion.

At the time of writing on Sunday (27 February), there is no safe and legal way for Ukrainians fleeing their homes to enter the UK unless they have close British relatives.

An announcement on the UK's Home Office website read: "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 UK."

Reacting to the news, Reynolds, 36, criticised the government for "making it very difficult for Ukrainian nationals to take safe haven" in the UK.

"But it has always been glad to take Russian money and allow Russian oligarchs to buy British citizenship," the musician continued.

The government is making it very difficult for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to take safe haven here in the UK, but it has always been glad to take Russian money & allow Russian oligarchs to buy British citizenshipSupport the wealthyAbandon the strugglingTories are consistent at least- (@RouReynolds) [*February 26, 2022*](https://twitter.com/RouReynolds/status/1497498893961076736?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) "Support the wealthy. Abandon the struggling. [*Tories*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tories) are consistent at least." [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's attack on Ukraine has been met with condemnation from world leaders as countries - [*including the US and UK - have announced sanctions against Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/uk-sanctions-russia-james-cleverly-b2022124.html). Steady lines of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** carrying backpacks and dragging suitcases formed at border crossings on Thursday (24 February), hours after Russia's attack. It is estimated that up to five million Ukrainian nationals will be displaced by the Russian invasion, and the [*UN Refugee Agency*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/un-refugee-agency) has warned of its "devastating humanitarian consequences". The International Rescue Committee has urged states to commit their support publicly, with senior representative and former French minister Harlem Desir telling The Independent: "This should not be looked at as another migration crisis. This is a crisis of war."It should not be business as usual, we need real support for the Ukrainian people."In a previous tweet, Reynolds took aim at the government's "hypocrisy" over the refugee crisis, retweeting a photograph of Downing Street lit up with the colours of the Ukrainian flag. The British musician wrote: "Clap for NHS workers but treat them like s\*\*\*. Light up Downing Street with Ukrainian colours but don't let anyone fleeing war into the country." Clap for NHS workers but treat them like shitLight up Downing Street with Ukrainian colours but don't let anyone fleeing war into the countryTories are consistent at least [*https://t.co/wlR42FhdHQ*](https://t.co/wlR42FhdHQ) - (@RouReynolds) [*February 26, 2022*](https://twitter.com/RouReynolds/status/1497503056753274880?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Since the conflict began, multiple celebrities have [*reacted to the Russia-Ukraine crisis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/news/ukraine-russia-putin-war-hollywood-b2023114.html%22%20title=%22The%20good,%20the%20bad%20and%20the%20ugly:%20How%20celebrities%20reacted%20to%20the%20Ukraine-Russia%20crisis).

Ryan Reynolds and Blake Lively [*promised to match donations made to assist* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/news/ryan-reynolds-blake-lively-ukraine-refugees-donations-b2024269.html) up to an amount of $1m (£745,850).

Meanwhile, [*John Cena drew criticism*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/news/john-cena-peacemaker-ukraine-russia-hbo-b2023029.html%22%20title=%22John%20Cena%20sparks%20backlash%20after%20appearing%20to%20use%20Russia's%20invasion%20of%20Ukraine%20to%20promote%20his%20show%20Peacemaker) after he appeared to use the invasion as an opportunity to promote his HBO series Peacemaker.

You can follow live updates on the [*Russia-Ukraine crisis here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-putin-war-invasion-today-b2022101.html).

**Load-Date:** February 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Hungarian PM warns of refugee wave if Russia invades Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64S5-TN31-JBNF-W20V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 12, 2022 Saturday 7:53 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,WORLD,AMERICAS,US POLITICS; Version:1

**Length:** 499 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Hungary's nationalist prime minister has warned of the possibility of hundreds of thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** entering his country in the case of a Russian invasion of Ukraine

**Body**

Hungary's nationalist prime minister warned Saturday that a [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) could send hundreds of thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing across the border into his country.

Right-wing populist leader Viktor Orban, speaking in an annual address that this year kicked off his political campaign for Hungary's parliamentary election on April 3, urged a peaceful resolution to the rising tensions in [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) that have stemmed from fears of an imminent Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Orban - a firm opponent of any types of immigration - said it was in Hungary's best interest to "avoid war," which he said would cause a wave of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and a disruption of the economy.

While urging a resolution of the tensions through dialogue, Orban said he opposed plans by the European Union to use sanctions against Russia - which has built up over 100,000 troops along Ukraine's borders - as a deterrent.

"Sanctions, punitive policies, lecturing or any other kind of arrogance on the part of the great powers are out of the question," Orban said.

Orban, who has led Hungary since 2010, has sought one of the closest relations with Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) of any European leader. In a meeting with Putin in the Kremlin last week, Orban lobbied for increased gas shipments from Russia and lauded his country's increased cooperation with Moscow in the areas of energy, trade and security.

Since Russia's annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014, Hungary under Orban has consistently opposed leveling EU sanctions against Moscow, although it has always ultimately voted for them.

Hungary has also blocked ministerial meetings between Ukraine and NATO over a Ukrainian language law that [*Budapest*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/budapest) argues violates the rights of the Hungarian ethnic minority in western Ukraine.

Yet on Saturday, Orban said that Ukraine serves as a crucial buffer zone between Hungary and Russia and that its "independence and viability are therefore of direct Hungarian interest."

Declaring that "the military strength of Europe should at least be comparable to that of Russia," Orban said that Hungary supports the development of European military capabilities and a common European defense force.

Hungary has declined to accept military reinforcements from NATO and the United States - which have been mobilized in several other Eastern European countries in response to the buildup of Russian troops along Ukraine's borders. He says Hungary's domestic military is sufficient to protect the country.

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Follow all AP stories on the tensions over Ukraine at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine).

Read More

[*Viktor Orbn 'invites' Trump to Hungary to boost re-election bid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/viktor-orban-donald-trump-hungary-elections-b2013213.html)

[*EXPLAINER: Why Europe lacks voice, power in Ukraine crisis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/european-union-europe-vladimir-putin-explainer-ukraine-b2006596.html)

[*Hungarian PM seeks gas deal with Putin amid Ukraine tensions*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/viktor-orban-vladimir-putin-moscow-ukraine-nato-b2005468.html)

[*Putin accuses the West of ignoring Russia's security concerns over Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/orban-putin-kremlin-moscow-ukraine-b2005217.html)

[*Johnson to fly to Ukraine for crisis talks amid fears of Russian attack*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/boris-johnson-vladimir-putin-ukraine-prime-minister-liz-truss-b2004133.html)

[*Johnson will urge Putin to 'step back from the brink' in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ukraine-boris-johnson-vladimir-putin-ben-wallace-prime-minister-b2004018.html)

**Load-Date:** February 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian artist paints group portraits for refugees to gift to UK hosts*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68YK-SJ61-DY4H-K3CF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 17, 2023 Thursday 7:00 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 546 words

**Byline:** Aisling Grace

**Highlight:** A British couple who received a Olha Son painting from the Ukrainian family living with them said it was ‘very moving’.

**Body**

A Ukrainian artist who paints family portraits for refugees to give to their UK hosts said she feels she is “doing something important” by “immortalising” Britons’ generosity and the impact of the war.

Olha Son, 35, fled Ukraine and moved in with a host family in [*Cornwall*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cornwall) , before beginning to accept commissions from ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who wanted to thank their British host families with a painting.

Ms Son has created numerous artworks showing [*Britons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britons) sheltering ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** with an umbrella decorated with a [*Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/union) flag, which she said makes “almost 100% of the [*Brits*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brits) cry”.

She told the PA news agency: “It’s like immortalising this phenomena of a British family who made a decision to open their doors to strangers from a different country, a different culture, in order to help in such a devastating situation as the war.”

Ms Son said she started painting five years ago when she was diagnosed with depression and initially painted still lifes, before receiving a message from a fellow Ukrainian refugee asking for a gift for their host family.

She brainstormed ideas for the painting, which was “easy” because she “was in an identical situation as my customer and I knew what it feels like to feel what they feel”.

She said: “That Ukrainian lady picked up the idea where a girl in a grey coat is holding an umbrella with a British flag over a girl who is wearing clothes in the colours of the Ukrainian flag.”

Ms Son posted a TikTok of her painting to her account, @olhason\_art, and has received over 66.5k views and hundreds of comments because “a lot of Ukrainians could relate to this painting”.

She said: “Since I started painting personalised umbrella [paintings], I receive a lot of messages like ‘we all couldn’t hold our tears back, it was such a heart-warming moment’.

A British couple who received a painting from the Ukrainian family living with them said it was “very moving” and they “got a bit teary” to receive the group portrait.

Kevin Kennedy Ryan, 33, and Jessica Ryan Smith 32, based in [*Sheffield*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sheffield) , took in a Ukrainian couple and their young son for several months.

Mr Kennedy Ryan said: “We had a big dinner the night before they left and they gave us some gifts and obviously we gave them some gifts and we had a big cry.”

The couple gave them a painting showing their two families, painted by Ms Son, which Mr Kennedy Ryan said left them “speechless” and “drove home some of the reality of the situation”.

During the months of cohabitation, the British couple hosted a “magical” Christmas dinner with their Ukrainian guests and watched the son walk his first steps, with Mr Kennedy Ryan saying it was “really wonderful watching him grow”.

The British couple offered their home to refugees before Russia invaded Ukraine and said: “It’s not necessarily about refugees from Ukraine or any one particular area. We all have this humanity that we share together.”

Ms Ryan Smith said: “These are people that are oftentimes fleeing horrendous situations and they don’t really have many options and they’re probably one of the lowest points of their lives.

“I feel like it’s one of those things that the least we could do is offer them a safe place to stay.

“I hope that if I was ever in that type of situation, that somebody would extend the same gratitude to me.”

**Load-Date:** August 18, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Gove must right the wrongs blighting our refugee response*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YM-HVV1-JCS0-D2C0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 10, 2022 Thursday

Second Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 2

**Length:** 766 words

**Byline:** EDITORIAL

**Body**

Boiled down to its most essential element, the prime minister's defence for his shameful response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis, apart from the usual pretence that it doesn't exist, is that Vladimir Putin has lined up Britain for special retaliatory treatment. Perhaps he will use the crisis to smuggle in spies, novichok and other means to avenge himself. Hence the need for "checks".

Perhaps the prime minister is underestimating the Russian secret service's ability to infiltrate other countries, which has sadly been proved with fatal consequences on too many occasions. If President Putin wants to shoot, poison or strangle an enemy in any corner of the Earth, he will find a way to do so. He does not need to dress his spies up as bogus ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. Besides, checks can be evaded and espionage is one of the few areas where Russia enjoys a global advantage.

Other countries have managed to allow in vastly more ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** with checks and controls, but in a rather more efficient manner. Even allowing for geography and the natural tendency for refugees to gather in bordering countries, the disparity in numbers of asylum seekers granted shelter is stark. On the prime minister's own figure, about 1,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have made it to the UK.

For context, around 2,000 have entered Ireland (with passport-free access to the UK under the common travel area), some 50,000 have gone to Germany and - albeit as a close neighbour - around 1.2 million to Poland. The Home Office was this week condemned for "dirty propaganda" after appearing to protest that Ireland's welcome for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** was a security threat to the UK.

The Ukrainian ambassador to the UK told MPs this week, with infinite politeness, "We also believe some bureaucratic procedures [for visas] could be simplified". He added: "I believe something like dropping everything [all visa checks] could be considered."

It is not nearly good enough, given the government's boastful rhetoric and the unfortunate fact that it was the west's collective failure to deter President Putin that visited this humanitarian disaster on Europe. Britain shares in the blame for that.

It is simply not the case, for example, that there is some unlimited guarantee of safety being offered to Ukrainians. The schemes are limited, highly conditional and - in any case - not even fully operational. For a distressed mother and child from, say, Mariupol, who knows no one in the UK, doesn't know where to find a "sponsor", and doesn't qualify for a work visa, there is no way to safety in Britain. Even if she and the child did qualify for one of the schemes, she would find them difficult to use.

In the Commons and elsewhere, the government continues to "gaslight" MPs and journalists who find real-life cases of Ukrainian people, with legitimate claims to come to Britain, being sent away from supposed visa access centres and having to navigate bureaucratic obstacles.

Old habits and attitudes die hard - especially in the mind of Priti Patel. For years, the home secretary, like her predecessors, has been fostering a hostile environment for migration; and indeed even for those of the Windrush generation who thought themselves well-settled in the UK. It is no great surprise that Ukrainians encounter the same sort of attitudes so many others have encountered in the past.

It has hardly been one of Ms Patel's finest hours, and the longer she spends in the post as home secretary, the more challenging parts of her brief are passed to other cabinet ministers. The Ukrainian crisis has been handed to Michael Gove, who may have a more compassionate approach - it would be difficult for him to be more flinty than Ms Patel. She cannot be indulged by Boris Johnson for much longer.

The prime minister has a formulation he likes to use about this refugee crisis which is that the government is doing "as much as it can". This actually means as much as its backbenchers and reactionary elements in the grassroots will allow him to. The ones who see Mr Putin's assassins in the buggy of every Ukrainian child refugee, and a wannabe welfare scrounger pushing it. This time, though, public opinion, including among Tory voters, is very much in favour of helping the homeless Ukrainians, and that shift in opinion is starting to be reflected in some of the more sensitive parts of the parliamentary Conservative Party.

No doubt Mr Gove will be offering a more humane face to the policy than Ms Patel has done. But it is all about the numbers. Mr Johnson says hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians will be helped to Britain soon. We shall see.

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Yousaf urged to house more asylum seekers by Home Office*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BC4-BY31-JBNF-W204-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 18, 2024 Sunday 6:46 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 868 words

**Byline:** By Sarah Ward

**Highlight:** Home Secretary James Cleverly said ‘greater parity’ needed to be achieved across the UK regions to provide ‘fair and equitable’ asylum accommodation.

**Body**

First Minister [*Humza Yousaf*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/humza-yousaf) has been urged to commit to housing more asylum seekers in [*Scotland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scotland) by Home Secretary [*James Cleverly*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/james-cleverly) – who suggested refugees could stay on a cruise ship in Edinburgh.

In a letter dated February 16, Mr Cleverly said Scotland had taken proportionately half the number of asylum seekers given accommodation in England, and asked that efforts were made to “rapidly” increase asylum accommodation north of the border.

Mr Cleverly said “greater parity” needed to be achieved across the UK regions to provide “fair and equitable” asylum accommodation, and asked to revisit options in Scotland, “such as our plans last summer to use MS Victoria in Edinburgh, which unfortunately we could not obtain agreement on”.

The cruise ship was used by the Scottish Government to temporarily house ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, from July 2022 until July 2023.

The Home Secretary cited a speech made by Mr Yousaf, which pledged “the Scottish Government — and the Scottish National Party — will always say we are proud of the benefits migrants bring to this country”.

Mr Cleverly wrote that Scotland currently houses eight asylum seekers for every 10,000 people – less than Wales, and half the 16 in England, and urged Mr Yousaf to “continue to work together to help address the challenges we collectively face”.

He also cited speeches by other SNP politicians, including Alison Thewliss MP-who said recently that Scotland “will take our responsibilities seriously” while criticising the [*UK Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk-government).

The letter said: “The [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) has made a commitment to exiting asylum hotels which are both unsustainable and costly to the taxpayer. In October 2023, we announced the first 50 hotel closures across the UK by the end of January which was the first step towards this. However, there is much more to do, and the only way to exit hotels is to continue to grow our asylum accommodation estate.

“This issue extends right across Great Britain, and it is essential that each part of the country plays its part. For dispersal and initial accommodation alone, Scotland currently house eight asylum seekers for every 10,000 people.

“This is in comparison to nine in Wales and 16 in England. I know that you and your colleagues take this issue seriously and there are many instances where you have signalled that the Scottish Government is willing to house more people.

“Providing safe and appropriate accommodation to those that claim asylum will help you deliver that aim and so I look forward to your support in going further in Scotland.

“In Scotland, there are currently 4,251 occupied bedspaces against a Full Dispersal occupancy target of 7,133 for 2023. In addition, since the launch of Full Dispersal in April 2022, the number of occupied bedspaces in Scotland has reduced by 857. Therefore, I am writing to ask for your support in rapidly increasing the asylum accommodation estate in Scotland.

“I believe that in order to achieve this, the use of large sites in Scotland, of which there are currently none, may need to be factored in. We should revisit options in Scotland, such as our plans last summer to use MS Victoria in Edinburgh, which unfortunately we could not obtain agreement on. This was despite the fact the Scottish Government had used it to house ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

“Reaching parity between different parts of the country on the number of asylum seekers per capita is the only way to deliver fair and equitable asylum accommodation. It is therefore paramount we work together to provide asylum accommodation that is equitable across Great Britain.”

A Scottish Government spokesperson said: “The Home Office is responsible for provision of asylum accommodation, including hotels procured as contingency initial asylum accommodation. Ministers have been clear that the UK Government needs to respect the important role of local authorities in asylum dispersal and should provide more financial support for them as it presses ahead with plans to close asylum hotels.

“Scotland has consistently played its part in supporting asylum dispersal since it was introduced over two decades ago. We are committed to supporting people to integrate into our communities and to providing the safety and security they need as they begin to rebuild their lives.

“Scotland is offering sanctuary to more than double the displaced Ukrainians per head of population than any other part of the UK, with more than 39,000 people with a Scottish sponsor being granted a visa, and more than 26,000 of those having arrived in the UK via a Scottish sponsor, with over 20,000 as a direct result of the Scottish Government acting as a super sponsor.

“As we did with the Syrian and Ukrainian Resettlement programmes, which saw all 32 local authorities in Scotland participate and welcome displaced people into their communities, Scotland stands ready to offer refuge and sanctuary for those who are displaced.

“From the outset of the conflict in Gaza, the Scottish Government has called on the UK Government to use its existing UK Resettlement Scheme, and ensure it is aligned with UNHCR to provide those who want to leave with the support they require.

“We have received the Home Secretary’s letter and will respond in due course.”

**Load-Date:** February 18, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Voices: A terrible human tragedy is unfolding before our eyes - and the UK government is turning its back*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WJ-26H1-DY4H-K4RK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 28, 2022 Monday 11:26 AM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:2

**Length:** 798 words

**Byline:** Layla Moran

**Highlight:** Refugees Welcome: In closing visa applications for those stuck in Ukraine without relatives in Britain, the government has failed those in desperate need of safety

**Body**

In cities, queues form at cash machines and petrol stations. Faces are shocked, voices are silent. As Russian forces rapidly advance through Ukraine we are seeing people huddled in makeshift bomb shelters and metro stations and some fleeing on foot with suitcases. As Western airlines avoid Ukrainian airspace, the only options are to escape by road.

Families are already being separated, with one Polish woman [*saying*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.reuters.com%2Fworld%2Feurope%2Fcentral-european-countries-prepare-receive-ukrainian-refugees-2022-02-24%2F&data=04%7C01%7CRupert.Hawksley%40independent.co.uk%7Ca99d09467fec4dfc53b108d9f868836c%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637813950048374276%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=bJPxYXbBf9C92es%2BbaybBzBzOGTywcoroj5BeKCiEcw%3D&reserved=0) she couldn't reach her Ukrainian husband and child on the other side of the border. "You can't get through," she told Reuters. "I can't reach them on the phone. I don't how to get my child out. I don't know what to do."

This is the human cost of Putin's aggression; innocent people forced from their homes and separated from loved ones by this illegal and unprovoked invasion.

A UN refugee agency spokesperson reported that 100,000 people have already fled, and the UN has warned that up to five million people could be [*displaced by the crisis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/ukraine-visas-russia-refugees-welcome-b2024267.html). A terrible human tragedy is unfolding before our eyes. We are seeing queues of people desperate to get out before it is too late, including LGBTQ+ people, journalists and activists who fear persecution at the hands of Russian forces.

It is imperative that the government works with the UNHCR and humanitarian agencies to establish safe and legal routes to seek asylum. That is why I have written, along with my Liberal Democrat colleagues, to the foreign and home Secretaries, urging them to make an ambitious commitment to resettle ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the UK. Many Ukrainians are seeking refuge in neighbouring countries, and we must also support those nations to provide the accommodation and support these refugees need.

But the government's response has so far been lacklustre. Instead of opening routes for safe passage, ministers are shutting the door to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. In closing visa applications for those stuck in Ukraine without relatives in Britain, the government has turned its back on a people in desperate need of safety and sanctuary.

I am also urging the government to withdraw its Nationality and Borders Bill - currently going through parliament - because it would criminalise Ukrainians and other refugees who come to the UK seeking asylum.

What we are seeing on the borders of Ukraine is not a migration crisis; it is a crisis born of war. As Russian tanks move ever closer to Kyiv, there can be no delay. In Afghanistan we saw a military campaign generate a humanitarian crisis. And the government [*simply did not do enough*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/afghanistan-boris-johnson-uk-refugees-b1909988.html). We cannot make the same mistakes again.

The government's scheme for Afghan refugees saw many families trapped in small hotel rooms, waiting to be properly resettled and far too many remain without the settled immigration status the government promised. Crucially, ministers failed to properly involve local authorities in the design and development of the scheme or to give them the funding they need.

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment sign up to our free weekly Voices newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

It is therefore vital that any resettlement scheme must be matched with sufficient funding for councils. Our local authorities are waiting to open their doors to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, but they cannot be expected to bear this burden alone. We need the government to start working now with local councils on an ambitious resettlement scheme for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, including a full five-year funding package for each and every person a council resettles.

Strong words from the prime minister must be followed by strong action. We must stand with the people of Ukraine and provide them with humanitarian and military aid, while unleashing the severest of sanctions against Putin and his cronies.

My [*heart goes out*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/letters/priti-patel-russia-ukraine-covid-b2024393.html) to the people of Ukraine today. The Liberal Democrats stand with them and will continue [*to put pressure on the government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ukraine-refugees-borders-bill-russia-b2023967.html) not to turn its back on those fleeing Ukraine in their hour of need.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

Layla Moran is the Liberal Democrat MP for Oxford West and Abingdon

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Billions more set to be slashed from overseas aid projects, Save the Children warns*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6686-3361-DY4H-K08G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 28, 2022 Sunday 8:19 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 875 words

**Byline:** Rob Merrick

**Highlight:** Exclusive: Government told to rethink decision to count costs of Ukraine refugees within shrunken budget to avoid ‘unimaginable consequences’

**Body**

Billions more will be slashed from [*overseas aid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/overseas-aid) projects within weeks unless ministers abandon rules diverting a quarter of funds to the costs of [***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ***refugees*** in the UK, [*Save the Children*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/save-the-children) is warning.

The alarm has been raised over a controversial decision to include spending on 118,000 Ukrainians welcomed to Britain within [*a budget reduced from 0.7 to 0.5 per cent of GDP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/foreign-aid-budget-cut-rishi-sunak-b1761670.html) and then strictly capped.

As the war grinds on, Save the Children estimates the bill will reach £3bn, which would be a staggering 25 per cent of aid spending in 2022, after £4bn has already been slashed from the budget.

The agency welcomes the help for refugees fleeing the invasion, but told The Independent there would be “unimaginable consequences” without an urgent rethink.

“Including those costs within a 0.5 per cent aid budget, which is already fully allocated, will result in further deep cuts in funding for those in the toughest circumstances across the world,” said Richard Watts, senior adviser for development finance.

“This isn’t right. The UK government should ensure its help for refugees here does not come at the expense of support for children across the world at this critical time. It can and must step up, and not back.”

Ministers have [*already ordered a stop to “non-essential” aid spending*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/uk-news/overseas-aid-cuts-treasury-oxfam-b2130769.html) – partly because of the ballooning Ukraine costs – with agencies still in the dark over existing projects, with just four months left in the calendar year.

The Independent understands that [*Liz Truss*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liz-truss) is on course to break a government pledge to restore the 0.7 per cent aid commitment in 2024, because of [*her planned £30bn-plus tax cuts that will benefit the wealthy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/tory-leadership-liz-truss-sunak-ifs-b2128608.html).

The government revealed only in late July that spending on ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** would count as official development assistance (ODA) within the 0.5 per cent cap.

This followed a cabinet tussle in which Ms Truss, the foreign secretary, lost out to home secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) , who is believed to have asked for cash to come from the aid budget.

There is also anger that donations of leftover Covid vaccines are also being counted as foreign aid, slashing an estimated further £300m from this year’s aid spending.

Mr Watts added: “Liz Truss raised concerns about the impact of the Ukraine war on her aid budget and hoped the Treasury would allocate additional funding. If she is the next prime minister, she will be in a position to make that change.”

[*Sarah Champion*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sarah-champion) , chair of the House of Commons international development committee, said: “It’s absolutely right that we step up to help the people of Ukraine, but we mustn’t abandon our commitment to the world’s poorest in doing so.

“We must show flexibility in increasing the 0.5 per cent target before the costs of providing much-needed help to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** lead to cuts that will cause real suffering elsewhere.”

And Preet Kaur Gill, Labour’s shadow minister for international development, said: “The UK is rightly united in supporting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing Putin’s barbaric and illegal war.

“But diverting aid from the world’s worst crises in a global emergency drives insecurity, extremism and people to flee their homes – leaving the UK exposed and the world less safe.”

However, Ms Truss is poised to win the Tory leadership race on a pledge of substantial tax cuts and must also find a way to bail out households and industry faced with rocketing energy bills.

The Conservatives broke their own manifesto commitment by slashing aid spending from 0.7 per cent of national income, despite a legal commitment to allocate that amount.

The cut was forced through despite [*warnings that huge numbers of people would die as a result*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/foreign-aid-vote-boris-johnson-commons-b1883349.html) , and it was done in a chaotic fashion in the rush to find immediate savings.

Under pressure, [*Rishi Sunak*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rishi-sunak) , chancellor at the time, promised the 0.7 per cent would be restored in 2024, provided Treasury rules were met, namely no borrowing for day-to-day spending and that debt was falling.

But the [*Institute for Fiscal Studies*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/institute-for-fiscal-studies) , which has attacked Ms Truss’s plans as unrealistic without big spending cuts, is warning that they also have stark implications for aid spending.

Ben Zaranko, a senior research economist at the IFS, warned: “Implementing a large package of tax cuts without accompanying spending cuts would act to push up borrowing.

“If, as seems all too possible, the government was then on track to breach its fiscal rules by a wide margin, that would cast doubt on whether aid spending would still return to 0.7 per cent of GDP by 2024.”

Mr Zaranko pointed out that Ms Truss has hinted at adopting fresh fiscal rules, but she has said nothing about restoring overseas aid during the campaign.

Save the Children expects 190,000 Ukrainians to arrive this year, putting the costs as follows: payments to local authorities (£1.5bn), accommodation (£400m), cash support (£375m), health costs (£500m), education costs (£300m) – just over £3bn in total.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office pointed to the rules “on what constitutes aid”, set out by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

“Support given to asylum seekers or refugees for the first 12 months of their stay in the UK, who originate from eligible countries, counts as aid,” a spokesperson said.

**Load-Date:** August 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*‘We’re not allowed to bring our baby from Ukraine’: Refugees refused after sudden UK rule change*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C10-KND1-JBNF-W0KV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 12, 2024 Sunday 9:53 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:5

**Length:** 990 words

**Byline:** Andy Gregory

**Highlight:** Exclusive: ‘Shameful’ new Home Office rules could leave hundreds of Ukrainians separated from their children, charity fears

**Body**

A [*Ukrainian refugee couple*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) who fled to the UK have been refused permission for their two-year-old daughter to join them after the government suddenly changed its sponsorship rules, The Independent can reveal.

Oleksandra and Yaroslav were offered shelter from Russia’s war under the Homes for Ukraine scheme in April 2022, leaving newborn Anna with her grandparents in Kyiv until they were settled in the UK with work and their own home.

But after finally overcoming the hurdles of finding accommodation and setting up their own marketing business in the UK, the couple’s submission in April for their daughter, now a toddler, to join them was refused by the Home Office, after rules for the schemes allowing Ukrainians to do so were tightened overnight in February.

“Now it seems like it’s impossible to bring Anna,” Oleksandra told The Independent. “I was almost there – and I wasn’t expecting [the legislation] to change. I’m very sad and frustrated, I don’t know what to do and how to react. If I am not able to bring Anna, we will be forced to leave everything and go somewhere else.

“I spent a lot of time building up the business, finding proper accommodation, and when we came here we didn’t have anything – our business in Ukraine was closed and we didn’t have any money. So it’s not a good situation.”

Despite the Home Office insisting that the new rules do not prevent [*children*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/children) from joining their parents, charities warn that the changes have created “unintended consequences” and could leave hundreds – if not thousands – of Ukrainians separated from their loved ones.

The “deeply shocking” failure “betrays our commitment to Ukrainians”, warned Labour peer [*Alf Dubs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lord-alf-dubs) , who himself arrived in the UK as a six-year-old fleeing the Nazis.

“We pay lip service to how much we want to help Ukraine and the Ukrainians, then in practice we don’t do it,” Lord Dubs told The Independent. “The most fundamental thing is, parents should be allowed to have their children with them – absolutely fundamental – and I think the government should be ashamed of itself.”

Lib Dem MP Alistair Carmichael said: “I struggle to decide what is most offensive about this case – the cruelty or the incompetence. These are both the defining characteristics of this Conservative Home Office. The fact that they do not seem to understand their own rules tells you all you need to know.”

While previously ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** could sponsor family members, now only British and Irish citizens or those with permanent leave to remain can do so. Announcing the changes on 19 February, the government [*said it had eschewed*](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65cf88d00f4eb10011a981a2/E03074471_-__HC_556__-_EXPLANATORY_MEMORANDUM__Web_Accessible_.pdf) the typical implementation period of 21 days to avoid a “misplaced surge of applications”.

Approached about Anna’s case by The Independent, the Home Office said: “We absolutely do not prevent a parent being joined by a child in the UK. The Ukraine scheme rules have never prevented this, nor do the changes prevent this.”

But despite their application for Anna stating that they are her parents, Oleksandra and Yaroslav received a refusal letter 11 days later, on 26 April, that said Anna was not eligible because – as per the new rules – her “sponsor does not meet the requirement that they must be a British or Irish citizen or have no time limit on their stay in the UK”.

“I don’t know how to react – it’s very, very sad and depressing,” said Oleksandra. “I was crying when I saw [the letter] because I expected they would personally look at the situation and let Anna in because we are her parents.”

Naqeeb Sadiq, a senior immigration adviser at the charity Settled, which helped with Anna’s visa application, said he fears that the new legislation – which served to close the Ukraine Family scheme, and tighten the rules relating to both the Homes for Ukraine and Ukraine Extension schemes – may have created “unintended consequences” and be keeping families apart.

“Earlier in the scheme, the government [*had to make amendments to the policy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/government-michael-gove-ukraine-homes-home-office-b2106683.html) because of issues relating to minors – that was within six months of the scheme being announced,” said Mr Sadiq. “So it may be the case that they’ve just overlooked it again.”

Warning that hundreds if not thousands of families could potentially be affected, Settled’s Ukraine schemes adviser Yuliia Ismail said: “Generally for Ukrainians, it’s quite typical, sometimes, to leave children in Ukraine or somewhere else with relatives before coming to the UK to get settled, because it’s so difficult for them to get private rented accommodation.”

As more families find their feet in Britain, Ms Ismail warned that Settled is among several organisations now seeing a rising number of cases similar to Anna’s. Oleksandra added: “I’m not alone – I know for sure, I have friends here in a similar situation. Nobody expected this.”

Urging the Home Office to grant young children visas in cases like this, the charity’s chief executive Kate Smart said: “This rule change, introduced with no warning, puts this family in a terrible position. Children in Ukraine’s war zones belong with their parents, safe in the UK.”

Agreeing that the new policy has left ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** with no way to bring their children, partners or family members to Britain, the Refugee Council also urged ministers to allow Ukrainians with temporary status in the UK to sponsor their close family members.

“Until they do, Ukrainians who have already suffered so much are being stopped from being with their loved ones and rebuilding their lives,” he said.

Insisting that their rules do not prevent children from joining their parents, a Home Office spokesperson added: “We continue to provide a safe and secure haven for those fleeing the ongoing conflict, whilst providing certainty and assurance for Ukrainians in the UK on their future as the war continues.”

If you are affected by any of these issues, Settled is a charity that gives free accredited advice in Ukrainian, at [*ukraineadvice@settled.org.uk*](mailto:ukraineadvice@settled.org.uk)

**Load-Date:** May 12, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugee camp in Mexico's capital to close*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65HR-7H41-DY4H-K4YK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 24, 2022 Tuesday 9:43 PM GMT

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**Length:** 315 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Organizers of a camp for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who had traveled to Mexico say they will soon close it and discouraged Ukrainians still in Europe from traveling to Mexico as they try to enter the United States

**Body**

Organizers of a camp for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who had traveled to Mexico said Tuesday they will soon close it and discouraged Ukrainians still in [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) from traveling to Mexico as they try to enter the [*United States*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/united-states).

Some 1,000 Ukrainians passed through the camp during the month that it was open on the east side of [*Mexico City*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mexico-city). Now, only about 120 remain and 98% of those already have sponsors lined up in the United States and expect to soon travel there, said Vlad Fedoryshyn, director of United with Ukraine, a nongovernmental organization, that collaborated with the Mexican government to establish the camp.

Anastasiya [*Polo*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/polo) , United with Ukraine spokeswoman, said Ukrainians still in Europe should register for the U.S. government's program and not waste money and effort traveling to Mexico. Before the camp was established in Mexico City, Ukrainians were traveling to Tijuana at the U.S.-Mexico border.

"We are asking people from Europe, Ukrainians, to go through the program from Europe, do not come to Mexico because it is much more expensive for them, it is a lot of traveling," Polo said. The camp will close by June 1, but Ukrainians remaining in Mexico will continue receiving support.

The program, Uniting for Ukraine, was announced by the U.S. government April 21. Four days later, Ukrainians showing up at the U.S.-Mexico border were no longer exempted from a pandemic-related rule that has been used to quickly expel migrants without an opportunity to seek asylum for the past two years.

To qualify people must have been in Ukraine as of Feb. 11; have a sponsor, which could be family or an organization; meet vaccination and other public health requirements; and pass background checks.

More than 6.5 million Ukrainians, mostly women and children, have fled Ukraine since Russia invaded its smaller neighbor on Feb. 24, according to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

**Load-Date:** May 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Pope visits refugees, urges Hungary to show charity to all*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6845-G2N1-DY4H-K10F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 29, 2023 Saturday 9:38 AM GMT

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**Length:** 813 words

**Byline:** Nicole Winfield and Justin Spike

**Highlight:** Pope Francis has thanked Hungarians for welcoming ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and urged them to help anyone in need

**Body**

Pope Francis thanked Hungarians on Saturday for welcoming ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and urged them to help anyone in need, as he begged for a culture of charity in a country where the prime minister has justified firm anti-immigration policies with fears that migration threatens Europe’s [*Christian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/christian) culture.

On the second day of a visit to Hungary, Francis met with refugees and poor people at St. Elizabeth’s church, which was named for a Hungarian princess who renounced her wealth to dedicate herself to the poor as a follower of the pope's namesake, St. Francis of Assisi.

Speaking in the white-brick church in [*Budapest*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/budapest) , Francis recalled that the Gospel instructs Christians to show love and compassion to all, especially those experiencing poverty and pain and “even those who are not believers.”

“The love that Jesus gives us and commands us to practice can help to uproot the evils of indifference and selfishness from society, from our cities and the places where we live — indifference is a plague —-and to rekindle hope for a new, more just and fraternal world, where all can feel at home,” he said.

Hungary’s nationalist government has implemented firm anti-immigration policies and refused to accept many asylum-seekers trying to enter the country through its southern border, leading to prolonged legal disputes with the European Union.

The conservative populist prime minister, Viktor Orban, has said that migration threatens to replace Europe’s Christian culture. Orban, who has held office since 2010, has hinged multiple election campaigns on the threats he alleges migrants and refugees pose to Hungarians.

While Orban's government has consistently rejected asylum-seekers from the Middle East and Africa, some 2.5 million Ukrainians fleeing war in their country found open doors. Around 35,000 of the refugees remain in Hungary and have registered for temporary protection there, according to the U.N.

Yet monetary assistance for the ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** has been meager. Fewer Ukrainians have opted to stay in Hungary than any other country in [*Eastern Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/eastern-europe) except Belarus, ception of Belarus.

One who has chosen to stay was Olesia Misiats, a nurse who worked in a Kyiv COVID-19 hospital when she fled with her mother and two daughters Feb. 24 of last year. First she went to the Netherlands, but high costs compelled her to move to Hungary, where she said she has found an apartment and given birth to her third daughter, Mila, who was in the pews Saturday with her mother and sister.

“Here it's safe,” Misiats said of her new life. She said she hopes one day to return to Kyiv, but for now she and her children are adapting. “I want to go back home. There it’s my life, it was my life,” she said. “But the war changed my life.”

There were conspicuously few people of color in the pews. Among them was artist and filmmaker Abouzar Soltani, a refugee from Iran who spent 553 days in one of Hungary’s transit zones with his 10-year-old son, Armin, after Hungarian authorities rejected their asylum claims in 2018.

Soltani later said of their 18 months staying in container shelters that they felt like “fish in an aquarium.” When a European court decision closed the transit zones, Soltani opted to remain in Hungary, where he still lives.

Francis praised the Hungary's Catholic Church for providing aid to people fleeing war and urged continued charity toward any who need help. He heard from a members of a Ukrainian family who fled Russia’s invasion, traveling for days to reach Hungary after missiles rained down on their hometown of Dnipro, in May of last year.

Oleg Yakovlev said he decided to bring his wife and five children to Hungary because he had worked here as a cook years ago and remembered he being welcomed.

“For us and our children, Hungary has been the start of a new life, of a new possibility,” Yakovlev told Francis as his two eldest children played an Argentine tango on the accordion and saxophone for the Argentine pope. “Here we were welcomed, and we found a new home.”

At the end of the event, a band of Hungarian Roma musicians serenaded the pontiff, drawing a standing ovation and cheers from the crowd and a thumbs up from Francis.

Francis started his Saturday visiting with children who have visual and physical disabilities. In the afternoon, he has his first big public event in Hungary, a youth rally at the city’s sports stadium.

He plans to wrap up his visit with an open-air Mass on Sunday and speech at Pázmány Péter Catholic University in Budapest.

Upon arriving in Hungary on Friday, Francis urged Europe to find again its founding values of peaceful unity as he denounced the “adolescent belligerence” of Russia’s war in neighboring Ukraine.

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Associated Press religion coverage receives support through the AP’s collaboration with The Conversation US, with funding from Lilly Endowment Inc. The AP is solely responsible for this content.

**Load-Date:** April 29, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Third of Homes for Ukraine sponsors ‘struggling’ with rising cost of living, ONS warns*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6648-YP61-JBNF-W25K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 10, 2022 Wednesday 10:27 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:11

**Length:** 859 words

**Byline:** Holly Bancroft

**Highlight:** The vast majority of respondents said they had incurred additional costs for utilities such as energy and water

**Body**

Almost a third of Homes for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) hosts have reported struggling with the rising [*cost of living*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cost-of-living-0) , according to the first survey by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) of those taking part in the scheme.

Responding to the report, campaigners warned that ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are at “risk of homelessness” because of problems with their housing arrangements.

Some 21 per cent of current and previous sponsors reported that the soaring cost of living was affecting their ability to provide support to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** “quite a lot”. A further 9 per cent said it affected their ability to help “very much”, while 41 per cent said that rising living costs had affected their ability to provide support “a little”.

The CEO of Refugee Council, Enver Solomon, said that the “additional burden of cost of living on families here in the UK poses a further threat to vulnerable Ukrainians”.

The Local Government Association called on ministers to increase the £350 a month “thank you payment” given to hosts “so sponsors can be sure it’s not costing them”.

Cllr James Jamieson warned that, as the six-month initial placement period ends, “there is a significant risk that – even if rematching is available – many Ukrainian families may need to present as homeless because of a lack of sponsors or other options”.

The survey, which received responses from 17,702 people, found that some sponsors have had to leave the Homes for Ukraine scheme because they can no longer afford to take part in it.

Of the hosts who signed up to house Ukrainians for six months or less, 23 per cent said they did not plan to continue because of the rising cost of living or because they could no longer afford to do so.

Mr Solomon said that the organisation is “already aware of hundreds of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, predominantly women and children, at risk of homelessness”. This is for a range of reasons, including a breakdown in relations between the host and the guests.

“We welcomed the fact that thousands of British people came forward to open their homes, however these hosting arrangements were always going to encounter challenges in the long term,” he said.

Almost one in five, or 19 per cent, of people told the ONS that they had intended to provide accommodation for six months rather than for a longer period of time. The most common reason for stopping, given by 58 per cent, was having only intended to provide short-term accommodation.

It comes as Money Saving Expert founder Martin Lewis [*hit out at Conservative leadership candidate Liz Truss’s proposed economic policies*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/truss-sunak-next-prime-minister-latest-b2141972.html) , calling them “a sticking plaster on a gaping wound”.

He warned that soaring energy bills are a “national crisis” that will leave millions “destitute” this winter unless the government urgently steps in to help.

Are you a Homes for Ukraine host struggling with the cost of living crisis? Email [*holly.bancroft@independent.co.uk*](mailto:holly.bancroft@independent.co.uk)

Almost all current or previous Homes for Ukraine sponsors who responded to the ONS survey – 99 per cent – said that they had incurred additional costs as a result of hosting Ukrainians.

In particular, 91 per cent reported an increase in the amount they had to pay for utilities, such as water, gas and electricity.

Most of the hosts had welcomed ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** into their own homes, rather than a spare or rented property, and most sponsors had met their guests on social media.

A significant proportion of sponsors were working full-time while hosting, with 43 per cent of respondents in this position, whereas just over one-fifth of people, 21 per cent, were retired.

A slight majority of hosts (56 per cent) were female.

When asked about the challenges of hosting, the most commonly reported issue was helping guests apply to get benefits, with 53 per cent of sponsors finding this difficult.

Commenting on the findings, Tim Gibbs of the ONS said: “As we come up to the sixth month since the Homes for Ukraine scheme was introduced, it is useful to find out what the experience of hosts has been.

“We see a lot of generosity and goodwill in what hosts report doing for their guests. The majority are still hosting, and many indicate a willingness to host beyond the initial six months.

“However, we also see the additional work and expense involved in hosting, with some saying more or ongoing support would be welcomed.”

Many of those surveyed, 23 per cent, said they intended to provide accommodation for longer than 12 months. They also said they provided a lot of extra help to families, such as showing them the local area.

More than 43,000 sponsors were invited to take part in the ONS research.

Last week The Independent reported that a Ukrainian family who had been kicked out of their home weeks after arriving in the UK [*had been helped by a good samaritan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-family-homeless-new-home-b2137230.html).

Maxim and Olga Hyryk had been living in fear that they could be made homeless after their landlords in Fareham, Hampshire suddenly told them to leave. The family had fled Russia’s invasion and come to the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

A British midwife has now offered the family of nine a house, which she was using as a holiday let, rent-free.

**Load-Date:** August 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Home news in brief*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6868-09R1-JCS0-D472-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

May 9, 2023 Tuesday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 13

**Length:** 498 words

**Body**

Met names boy fatally stabbed near school

Police have named the teenage victim of a fatal stabbing near a school in east London as Renell Charles, 16. Renell, who lived in the area and was a pupil at Kelmscott School in Walthamstow, died at the scene from his wounds on Friday. A 16-year-old boy has been arrested on suspicion of murder after attending an east London police station. He remains in police custody.

A post-mortem that took place on Saturday found the cause of death to be a stab wound to the chest. Labour MP Stella Creasey, who represents Walthamstow, has shared a police appeal for footage or images of the violent incident.

Bank sorry after loan refused over ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***

A bank has issued an apology after rejecting a homeowner's mortgage application due to them hosting two ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. A mother and her young daughter have been staying in an annexe at Dominik Zaum's family home since June 2022. When his mortgage came up for renewal, Mr Zaum begun shopping around for a new deal and eventually applied for one with Halifax, he told BBC Radio 4's Money Box programme.

But Halifax refused due to a risk he could rent out the space for commercial gain in the future. "We have since secured a mortgage with another bank so, fortunately, it has not had any impact on our finances," Mr Zaum said. Halifax has since apologised for its refusal.

Met defends officers after two dogs shot dead

The Metropolitan Police has defended its officers after a suspect was tasered and two dogs were shot dead on Saturday afternoon. Officers responded to reports of a dog attack on a woman on Commercial Road in east London. They followed a man and his two large bull-breed dogs onto a towpath in Limehouse. The man refused to surrender the dogs and after a standoff he was Tasered and both dogs shot dead.

The Met said in a statement: "This is never an easy decision for any officer to take, but police have a duty to act where necessary before any further injury is caused. The Met's Directorate of Professional Standards will review the circumstances of the incident."

Millions of workers face losing right to strike, warns TUC

The TUC has warned that millions of workers face losing the right to strike because of the government's controversial legislation on minimum levels of service during industrial action. Analysis by the union body suggested that 5.5 million workers in England, Scotland and Wales could be affected by the legislation. Workers in Northern Ireland are not subject to the bill, which is due for its third reading in the House of Lords today.

Unions say the bill will mean that when workers lawfully vote to strike in health, education, fire, transport, border security and nuclear decommissioning, they could be forced to attend work and be sacked if they do not comply. General secretary Paul Nowak said: "This is a spiteful bill. No one should be sacked for trying to win a better deal at work. It's undemocratic, it's unworkable and it's very likely illegal."

**Load-Date:** May 8, 2023

**End of Document**



[*David Cameron meets Zelensky in Ukraine in first visit as foreign secretary – and praises Boris Johnson*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69N1-9141-JBNF-W354-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

November 16, 2023 Thursday 8:29 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:3

**Length:** 669 words

**Byline:** Archie Mitchell

**Highlight:** Lord Cameron joked about his ‘disagreements’ with Boris Johnson, but said support for the Ukrainian president was ‘the finest thing’ his government did

**Body**

[*David Cameron*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/david-cameron) has visited [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) in his first overseas trip as [*foreign secretary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/foreign-secretary).

The former [*prime minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prime-minister) joked about his “disagreements” with [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) , but said support for the [*Ukrainian president was “the finest thing” his government did*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-dnipro-river-putin-news-b2448219.html%22%20title=%22Russia-Ukraine%20war%20live:%20Putin%20troops%20attempting%20‘pincer’%20movement%20to%20encircle%20Avdiivka).

And Lord Cameron promised [*Britain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britain) would maintain “[*moral, diplomatic, economic and military support*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/david-cameron-ukraine-volodymyr-zelensky-james-cleverly-home-office-b2448279.html%22%20title=%22Cameron%20visits%20Ukraine%20in%20new%20role%20as%20Foreign%20Secretary) ” to the war-torn country “for however long it takes”.

In a video of the [*meeting in Odesa, shared by president Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-dnipro-river-war-latest-b2448196.html%22%20title=%22Russia%20admits%20Ukrainian%20troops%20crossed%20Dnipro%20river%20but%20says%20‘fiery%20hell’%20awaits%20them) , Lord Cameron said: “I had some [*disagreements with my friend Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/michael-gove-trusted-conservative-party-leader-prime-minister-boris-cameron-a8931331.html%22%20title=%22Michael%20Gove%20says%20he%20has%20'evolved'%20since%20he%20described%20himself%20as%20being%20'incapable'%20of%20being%20PM) , and we have known each other for 40 years, and his support for you was the finest thing that he and his government did.”

The [*newly-appointed foreign secretary added*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-grain-theft-ukraine-russia-latest-b2447644.html%22%20title=%22Putin%20could%20face%20new%20war%20crime%20case%20as%20evidence%20suggests%20starvation%20of%20Ukraine%20was%20pre-planned) : “I wanted this to be my first visit. Personally, I admire the strength and determination of the Ukrainian people.

“And what I want to say by being here is we will continue to give you the moral support, the diplomatic support the economic support, but above all the military support, not just this year and next year, but for however long it takes.”

Ukraine’s president said the pair discussed the supply of weapons for his forces fighting against the Russian invasion when they met in Kyiv.

Mr Zelensky said: "We had a good meeting focused on weapons for the frontline, strengthening air defence, and protecting our people and critical infrastructure. I am grateful to the UK for its support!"

Lord Cameron, the former prime minister, became foreign secretary on Monday and the early visit to Ukraine will be intended to demonstrate Britain’s continued support. His predecessor James Cleverly had been scheduled to make the visit before being moved to the Home Office in Monday’s reshuffle.

Mr Johnson, Lord Cameron’s long-time rival, was a steadfast supporter of Ukraine, striking up a close relationship with president Zelensky after Russia’s invasion.

Lord Cameron is the first British minister to travel to the Black Sea port city since the war began. It has come under fire since Russia declined to renew a grain export deal with Ukraine in August.

However, a new corridor in the Black Sea, close to the shoreline, has allowed 91 ships to export cargo. “In the last three months, Ukraine has made remarkable progress in the Black Sea to drive the Russian Navy eastwards and open critical export corridors for Ukraine’s economy and global food supplies,” Cameron said.

Meanwhile, a campaigner and host for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** has voiced concerns after a government minister declined to rule out visa fees for those who have fled to the UK amid the ongoing war. The first visas issued as part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme, launched last year following the Russian invasion, will expire in March 2025.

In a written response to a question in parliament, immigration minister Robert Jenrick said: “We keep the need for a possible extension of UK sanctuary, beyond March 2025, under consistent review. This includes whether to require a fee.”

Kitty Hamilton, co-founder of the advocacy group Vigil for Visas, has hosted a number of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, said: “They are not here because they want to be, they are here because there is a war in their country and they can't go back yet. It seems unfair to add to this insecurity with a lack of clarity on whether our guests can stay here in the UK."

It came as Finland closed four crossing points on its long border with Russia to stop the flow of Middle Eastern and African migrants that it accuses Moscow of ushering to the border in recent months. Finnish authorities say Russia has started allowing undocumented travellers to access border zones and enter crossing points where they can request asylum in Finland.

Separately, Washington imposed sanctions on 10 individuals in the western Balkans in a bid to contain Russian influence there. They include Savo Cvijetinovic, a senior official of the political party led by Milorad Dodik, the pro-Russia leader of Republika Srpska (RS), the Serb-dominated half of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Load-Date:** November 16, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Investigators in killing of 2 Ukrainians in Germany are looking into a possible political motive*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BX7-95K1-JBNF-W003-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 29, 2024 Monday 1:17 PM GMT

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**Length:** 406 words

**Byline:** Kirsten Grieshaber

**Highlight:** The public prosecutor general's office in Munich has taken over the investigation into the stabbing deaths of two Ukrainian men in southern Germany because of a possible political motivation for the crime

**Body**

The public prosecutor general's office in [*Munich*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/munich) on Monday took over the investigation into the stabbing deaths of two Ukrainian men in southern Germany because of a possible political motivation for the crime, German news agency dpa reported.

The two Ukrainians, who were 23 and 36 years old and lived in the southern German county of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, were killed at a shopping center in the village of Murnau in Upper Bavaria. Shortly after the slayings on Saturday evening, police arrested a 57-year-old Russian on suspicion of murder, dpa reported.

The public prosecutor general's office usually takes over investigations from regular prosecutors if there is a possibility that a crime was politically motivated. The Bavarian Central Office for Combating Extremism and [*Terrorism*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/terrorism) is also involved in the investigation of the killings, dpa reported.

The Ukrainian foreign ministry said in a statement Sunday that it appeared the two men were military servicemen undergoing medical rehabilitation in Germany.

The names of the victims and the suspect weren’t released in line with German privacy rules. The motive for the killings isn't yet known, authorities said.

According to an initial investigation, the three men knew each other, but further details need to be verified, local police spokesperson Stefan Sonntag told dpa. There were also indications that all three men had consumed alcohol.

“We have clear evidence that the suspect was under the influence of alcohol,” Sonntag was quoted as saying.

A spokesperson for German Chancellor [*Olaf Scholz*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/olaf-scholz) on Monday expressed concern about the killings.

“This is a worrying incident, no question about it. The circumstances must now be investigated more closely," Steffen Hebestreit told reporters in [*Berlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/berlin).

“We can only speculate about the motives at the moment," he added. "But it is clear that we cannot tolerate such a thing on German soil anyway and that the Ukrainians, Ukrainians who have fled to us from the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine, must now be safe.”

More than 1 million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have come to Germany since Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Germany is also home to a significant Russian immigrant community and 2.5 million Russians of German ancestry who mostly moved to the country after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s.

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Associated Press journalist Illia Novikov in Kyiv, Ukraine, contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** April 29, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Poland builds a border wall to deter migrants as it welcomes Ukrainian refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6574-R8H1-DY4H-K34T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 14, 2022 Thursday 12:01 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1950 words

**Byline:** Chico Harlan

**Highlight:** Krakow is hurrying to finish a $380 million 116-mile steel wall that the government says will be 'impenetrable'

**Body**

Her impulse was to welcome people in desperation, so Maria Ancipiuk made sure her border town was ready.

As immigrants mostly from the [*Middle East*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/middle-east) started streaming into [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) last year from [*Belarus*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/belarus) , she lobbied the mayor to offer up two empty town-owned apartments for anybody who might need them. Volunteers changed the wallpaper and renovated the flooring. Ancipiuk bought a refrigerator and a television.

Five months later, though, the apartments are empty.

Rather than being welcomed into Polish homes, the vast majority of people crossing from Belarus are being detained or pushed back by Polish authorities.

That stance, in effect just to the north of Poland's border with [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , means two different groups seeking the same thing --refuge --are arriving to find what amounts to two different versions of Europe.

Along one segment of Poland's border, where 2.5 million Ukrainians have fled, border agents help carry duffel bags, push wheelchairs, hold tired children and escort to safety [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) who've been granted automatic European Union residency for up to three years.

On another segment of that border, Poland is trying to stop what it describes as "illegal" immigrants by using drones, infrared cameras and helicopters. It has dispatched 13,000 soldiers and border guards to patrol the forested boundary, while sealing off the area --under an emergency decree --to journalists and human rights groups. It is hurrying to finish a $380 million 116-mile steel wall that the government says will be "impenetrable."

"I cannot stand the contrast," said Ancipiuk, a 65-year-old town councilor and grandmother of six who now furtively provides aid to immigrants trying to move through the Polish forest at night. "Ukrainians are considered war refugees and Yemenis are considered migrants. Why? What is the difference?"

Poland's approach is in line with the broader EU policy of forcefully deterring undocumented immigration --including from parts of the world where there are few legal options for reaching this continent.

The EU has been funding the Libyan coast guard to thwart immigrants from crossing the Mediterranean to Italy. In Greece, security forces have been accused by immigrants and by Turkey of repelling would-be asylum seekers back into Turkish waters.

And when Poland vowed to block people trying to cross from Belarus --a crisis orchestrated by authoritarian leader Alexander Lukashenko, who lured people to his country with the promise of access to Europe --EU leaders said Poland was justifiably responding to a "hybrid attack."

Months later, though, Poland's national human rights institution says the country is not living up to European ideals --and is also violating international law.

It is illegal for security authorities to expel foreign nationals without giving them a chance to claim asylum. Yet humanitarian groups have documented Polish border guards tracking down people in the woods and driving them back to the Belarusian border, a practice that Poland's parliament has effectively legalized. Poland so thoroughly patrols the border that some immigrants say they've been pushed back to Belarus more than a half-dozen times. The Council of Europe's human rights commissioner said one person who returned to Belarus had given birth only hours earlier.

Poland has garnered much praise for its willingness to accept so many refugees in the wake of [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's invasion of Ukraine. But the war also leaves Poland in a position where it is sending people back to a country that is serving as a staging ground for missiles launched into Ukraine.

"Poland should not be sending anybody back," said Hanna Machinska, Poland's deputy commissioner for human rights. "Belarus is not a safe country. There is no question about it."

Belarus has one of the world's most repressive governments, and its approach to immigrants is also harsh: Though it invited thousands of people, it appears to have no interest in hosting them; hundreds spent the winter in a warehouse, and when the facility was recently shuttered, the immigrants were taken to the Polish border and given instructions to leave.

For those crossing from Belarus who are fortunate enough not to be pushed back, the next stop is generally a closed detention center, including one where people are kept in rooms with 24 beds. Poland permits only a small subset to move into alternative facilities --like the homes Ancipiuk had prepared in Michalowo. Since January, as the overall flow from Belarus started to decline, the number of lucky few has been zero.

In mid-March, Ancipiuk received a call from a regional official, notifying her of funding incentives for towns that would host Ukrainians.

She asked if there were similar incentives for hosting people who'd crossed from Belarus.

"There was a bit of consternation on the line," Ancipiuk said.

She never heard back with an answer but took the silence as a no. Her town is now offering the two apartments to refugees from Ukraine as well.

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At Poland's border agency headquarters in Warsaw, Lt. Anna Michalska said her country is responding as any should: by defending order and its own laws. Lukashenko had precipitated the emergency in a place where undocumented border-crossings had once been "practically zero," she said, and she argued that the people who'd taken the offer to go to Belarus had the time and luxury to plan their journey. They booked tourist visas. Unlike Ukrainians, she said, they are not looking "for the first place to be safe."

What they tend to want above all, she said, is a life in Germany.

She denied the widely documented accusation that Poland is pushing back people who request asylum. Most people don't want to apply for protection, she said, knowing such a request triggers a mandatory stay in the country. She said there is no legal problem in returning people to Belarus.

"I don't have information that there is war in Belarus," she said. "We're not a taxi service from Belarus to Berlin."

So Poland is building its wall. The border agency granted two Washington Post journalists access to the restricted zone, providing them a meeting point five miles from Belarus, where a border guard van was waiting. In the exclusion zone, police worked checkpoints, and the road through villages and small farms was all but empty, aside from military vehicles. The border guards described a daily tension: immigrants who launch stones at security authorities, smugglers who run routes to and from Germany, activists who communicate with the immigrants and "incentivize" them to cross.

Then the van stopped at the wall.

It is partially completed, composed of 18-foot-high planks of vertical steel beams, with tiny spaces in between. The spaces provide visibility to the other side, and from afar, the wall has the look of a translucent silver strip running along the horizon, covering a territory where this year there have been more than 3,500 attempts to cross.

"Everything is going according to plan," said Katarzyna Zdanowicz, a border guard spokeswoman who was on the tour. She said the wall would be completed in June.

She said the border guard over the past months has improved "a lot" in its efficiency in stopping people. While waiting for the wall to be completed, the agency has strung razor wire across the border, plowed new roads and purchased tear gas canisters.

As part of the tour, Zdanowicz walked over to a green-painted Toyota SUV, parked in a field, where two agents were patrolling the border with high-resolution cameras.

"We're trying to show that this is not the way to come," she said.

In villages near the border, some residents --sympathetic to the plight of immigrants --have taken to turning on green lights in their homes, a signal that they have a safe place to stay for someone on the run. Michalska, the border official in Warsaw, said it is permissible to provide housing for somebody coming from Belarus --on the condition that the host immediately alerts the border guards.

"Otherwise," she said, "you're offering help for an illegal stay in Poland."

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Activists and human rights officials say Poland is treating the immigrants coming through Belarus as universally undeserving of protection in Europe when that is not always the case. Some come from countries, such as Cameroon, whose citizens rarely win asylum in Europe. But others come from countries such as Yemen, ravaged by war, or Syria, where towns have been decimated by Russian airstrikes.

For Ibrahim Al Maghribi, 27, a Syrian, seeing Poland's response to Ukraine has made him feel all the more confounded about the inequities.

After being displaced from his home outside Damascus, all he wanted was safety and a "decent life," he said in an interview conducted over WhatsApp, because he said he could be more articulate with written English.

To get that life, he booked a tour package to Belarus, where he was chauffeured by members of the Belarusian military to a spot along the Polish border they said was easy to cross. After walking miles overnight in the Polish forest, he was arrested by Polish border guards who told him "this is not your land." He was returned to Belarus, which denied him reentry as well, leaving him stuck briefly between two borders, before trying to enter Poland again. This time, he and some friends successfully reached the car of a smuggler and eventually wound up in Germany --a trip that cost him $5,000, paid to tour guides and drivers, as well as several nights of exhaustion and sleeplessness.

"It's a horrible feeling to feel that you came from another planet," said Al Maghribi, who is now applying for asylum and living in a public housing complex in Rieden, Germany. The same Polish authorities who welcome Ukrainians wouldn't even "offer us a glass of water," he said.

One consequence of Poland's approach is that immigration along the Belarusian border has been pushed nearly out of view. Poland denied a request to visit the closed centers holding asylum seekers.

Activists say they have had to become more cautious after Poland last month arrested four volunteers on charges of organizing illegal immigration.

Even the number of immigrant deaths in Poland is disputed; the government says nine have died since the middle of last year, while activists put the number at more than two dozen. Among the unknowns is what happens to immigrants who are pushed back and don't return --including two Kurdish families, both with infants, who were repelled several times after crossing into Poland and recently fell out of communication with activists.

"We can't reach them," said Monika Matus, an activist working with one of the main border activist groups. "This is the reason I'm having a hard time sleeping at night."

Even at the height of the crisis, last November, the volume of people crossing was about 700 per day --compared with tens of thousands of Ukrainians. Now, the number of arriving from Belarus has dropped even further; some days, as many as 130 try to cross, according to Polish government data. Other days, it's only a few dozen. The decrease stems in part from pressure on international airlines and tour groups to discontinue the immigrant pipeline to Belarus. Some of those crossing now enter Belarus not directly but via Russia. Activists who used to be overwhelmed by middle-of-the-night SOS calls now go some days without a single alert.

For Poland, it's a sign that its tactics are working.

For activists, it's a sign that Poland's response has been disproportionate.

"We're spending so much money to create a fortress," said Tomasz Thun-Janowski, a volunteer for the humanitarian aid group Fundacja Ocalenie, "when helping them would cost a fraction."

Washington Post

**Load-Date:** April 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Sadiq Khan urges UK to 'do more' to assist refugees from Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6533-Y6N1-JBNF-W1Y5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 26, 2022 Saturday 3:36 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 312 words

**Byline:** Ted Hennessey

**Highlight:** The Mayor of London was speaking during a march in the capital.

**Body**

The UK should be doing "much more" to aid ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, [*Sadiq Khan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sadiq-khan) has said, as he joined a march in support of the country.

A large crowd, including the [*Mayor*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mayor) of [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london) , gathered near [*Hyde Park*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hyde-park) on Saturday afternoon for a march and vigil to send a unified message of support to the people of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Speaking ahead of the demonstration, Mr Khan said he was there to condemn Russia's "barbaric aggression".

He told the PA news agency: "Londoners over the last few weeks have shown that we're opening our arms to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, whether it's by donating money to those charities doing a brilliant job in Ukraine or by opening our homes to those fleeing Ukraine.

"It is important throughout the next few days, weeks to make it far, far easier, and much more easier for those who are fleeing Ukraine to come here.

"You compare our Government's actions versus the actions of Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Poland, it's embarrassing.

"We've got be doing much more."

A sea protesters draped in the Ukrainian colours of yellow and blue then made their way towards Trafalgar Square.

Crowds held banners reading "stop (Vladimir) Putin's war", "no fly zone" and "solidarity with Ukraine" and sang as police officers followed.

Chants of "we stand with Ukraine" rang out as traffic behind was brought to a standstill.

A number of speeches from Mr Khan, Ukrainian politicians and European leaders are expected to be made later on.

The London leader also urged those in the capital to continue their "generosity" towards refugees.

He added: "I'm full of admiration for anybody who has the space to provide a room for those who have fled Ukraine.

"It's really important families are not left to their own devices, the Government has to step up and support them."

It comes as Mr Khan announced more than £1.1m in funding to support migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum in London.

**Load-Date:** March 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'Completely untrue': Ryanair chief denies airline hiked flight prices for refugees fleeing Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6515-CH81-DY4H-K1T1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 17, 2022 Thursday 10:49 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS & ADVICE,TRAVEL; Version:2

**Length:** 306 words

**Byline:** Lucy Thackray

**Highlight:** 'All the flights are filling up and as they fill up, they pay the highest fares,' says Michael O'Leary

**Body**

[*Ryanair*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ryanair) boss Michael O'Leary has denied that the airline has hiked its flight prices for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the Russian invasion, calling the accusations "completely untrue".

His comments come after the Ukrainian ambassador to [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) , Larysa Gerasko, accused the budget carrier of increasing fares from Poland, where millions of Ukrainians have fled following Russian attacks on their country.

"Completely untrue -we have very low fare flights coming to and from Poland," said Mr O'Leary at the Cheltenham Festival racecourse on Wednesday.

"All of the airports, we've checked into it, and all the flights are filling up and as they fill up they pay the highest fares.

"'But we have on today, tomorrow and in the coming days fares of 20 one way, 50 one way. There's loads of cheap flights out there."

The matter was raised at a European Union Affairs committee meeting at Leinster House on Wednesday, where Ambassador Gerasko said she would welcome charter flights from Poland to Ireland.

"We would be very grateful for that, because it is very difficult to buy tickets from Warsaw or from Krakow to Dublin," she said.

"And moreover, may I address this issue to Ryanair because they raised the prices and it's unfortunate."

Ms Gerasko said she had contacted Ryanair a week ago but had not heard back, and confirmed that she would be meeting with Irish transport minister Eamon Ryan to discuss the matter.

When asked whether the rise in demand was due to the war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , Mr O'Leary added: "Every flight, when it fills, the last few seats are the higher fares -that's how we get to sell so many seats at 20 and 30."

Ireland has been praised for its [*warm welcome of thousands of* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-ireland-refugees-welcome-b2035634.html) in the past few days.

On Wednesday, the Irish premier Michel Martin said that [*6,646 refugees had so far come into Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ireland-micheal-martin-moldova-joe-biden-government-b2036350.html) from Ukraine.

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*This is not the 'energy security' that Boris Johnson promised*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:655W-D811-JBNF-W4XG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 8, 2022 Friday 3:25 PM GMT

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**Section:** LETTERS,VOICES; Version:3

**Length:** 980 words

**Highlight:** Letters to the editor: our readers share their views. Please send your letters to [*letters@independent.co.uk*](mailto:letters@independent.co.uk)

**Body**

B[*oris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) wants to include nuclear energy-driven power stations as part of the energy infrastructure of the UK in order that we will not, in future, be dependent on foreign sources of power. Apart from the intrinsic risk of a malfunction through whatever cause and the problem of disposal of nuclear waste, I'm not sure where the UK uranium mines are located. If we, as I suspect, do not have any "British" uranium ore, we will have to import it.

This immediately negates the "energy security" argument put forward by Johnson et al. The only truly national sources of energy apart from fossil fuels are wind, tidal and solar, combined with a limited amount of geothermal energy in some geographical areas. If the UK really wants energy security then nuclear has to be discarded in favour of these non-polluting and limitless energy sources.

Patrick Cleary

Gloucestershire

In the discussion about the government's new energy strategy, I have heard no reference to the potential use of small-scale hydro generation. The UK receives substantial rainfall on high ground and this water tumbles down innumerable streams to lower ground as it makes its way to the sea. Is it beyond our engineering ingenuity to devise cost-effective small generators to exploit this free source of energy?

Such schemes would of course need connecting to the grid, adding to the initial cost, but the running costs would be minimal compared to nuclear power or offshore wind. The pioneering Lord Armstrong showed what could be done with the small hydro-scheme installed in the late 19th century at his Cragside home in Northumberland, the first house in the world to be lit by electricity.

John Wilkin

Bury St Edmunds

The law isn't the only thing that matters

Two things apropos Ms Murty and her non-dom status. First, the optics: this simply does not look good and people will make a connection with the chancellor's awful treatment of the poorest in his spring statement.

Secondly, while the legal position appears clear, and that no law has been broken, the law, in all matters in which it applies, really is the lowest common denominator of behaviour.

Richard Lloyd

Dunfermline

Can we stop politicians from lying?

How do you stop the prime minister and ministers from lying and making false statements? The answer may lie in research being undertaken at Tel Aviv University that is predicted to result in artificial intelligence-equipped cameras able to detect deception by measuring people's subtle facial movements.

But, once developed, would parliament agree to their installation? Perhaps we should ask the prime minister for an honest opinion!

Roger Hinds

Surrey

Priti Patel and ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***

Only a quarter of the 12,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** granted UK visas have actually made it here. Asked to explain why, home secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) replied: "I'll be very candid, it has taken time. Any new scheme takes time, any new visa system takes time".

Britain has accepted far fewer ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** than other countries, with Germany opening its doors to 300,000 Ukrainians and Ireland welcoming 20,000. According to Patel, this is because "Germany is an EU country".

This explains nothing. Faced with the refugee crisis, most European countries - Germany and Poland among them - have put humanitarian considerations over bureaucracy and have waived visa requirements. It seems to me, under Priti Patel, the UK Home Office has been weaponised against refugees.

Patel has built her career on creating a hostile environment for refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants who she views as criminals. I believe Patel's Home Office is an anti-refugee machine and it doesn't have a reverse gear.

The UK is treating ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** with the same inhumanity it has treated refugees from Afghanistan, Syria and Libya.

Sasha Simic

London

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment, sign up to our free weekly Voices Dispatches newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

Expelling Russia from the UN may be necessary

Expelling Russia from the Human Rights Council of the United Nation is entirely appropriate given the scale of human rights transgressions committed upon the people of Ukraine.

A far bolder, if more difficult, task would be to eject Russia outright from the UN. A precedent was Russia's (then the Soviet Union) ejection from the League of Nations in 1939 for the illegal invasion of Finland. To be the only country to be thrown out of both world peace-keeping organisations would be a national humiliation, however Putin tries to present it.

Of course, enforcing expulsion requires overcoming Russia's veto in the Security Council, a challenge made more difficult by the non-committal position of China. Technically, Russia's legal place on the Security Council has always been dubious given it simply succeeded in the place of the USSR after its collapse.

And if Russia's removal cannot be achieved then making both the Security Council and General Assembly more an international courtroom (as to some degree it became during the Cuban missile crisis) to daily hold Putin to account with graphic testimony and imagery of his brutal campaign of terror, for the world and those still uncommitted nations to hear and see, may be the next best thing.

Paul Dolan

Cheshire

**Load-Date:** April 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine war: Refugees Welcome campaign raises more than £100,000 in under a week*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XR-XCJ1-DY4H-K02M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 5, 2022 Saturday 11:10 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:2

**Length:** 348 words

**Byline:** Zoe Tidman

**Highlight:** Refugees Welcome: The Independent has launched a campaign to support ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the war

**Body**

The Independent's campaign to raise funds for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing their homes to escape the war waged by Russia has raised more than £100,000 in less than a week.

The donations will go towards providing vital support for those displaced by the conflict, who have been forced to leave behind homes, jobs and families as they seek out safety.

The fundraiser, part of our [*Refugees Welcome appeal*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) , will help charities to deliver humanitarian aid, including accommodation, clothing, food, sanitary goods and medicine.

From Thursday, The Independent announced that all new funds raised would go to the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal launched that day. This brings together 13 leading UK aid charities providing support overseas, including the Red Cross and Save the Children, whose efforts donations had supported up to that point.

And every donation from our readers to the DEC appeal [*will be matched pound-for-pound by the UK government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/refugees-welcome-ukraine-appeal-donations-b2027473.html) , up to £20m.

The 13 member charities who will receive donations from our appeal are: Action Against Hunger, ActionAid UK, Age International, British Red Cross, Cafod, Care International UK, Christian Aid, Concern Worldwide UK, International Rescue Committee UK, Oxfam, Save the Children UK, Plan International UK, and World Vision UK.â¯â¯â¯

These work to provide essential aid, including medical help, warm clothes, beds and psychosocial support, both inside Ukraine and in neighbouring countries.

To donate, please [*click here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gofundme.com%2Frefugeeswelcome&data=04%7C01%7CJane.Dalton%40independent.co.uk%7Cbab62006a6c34094ed2108d9fc7a213b%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637818423752504197%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=YT37s6vhoOvthHgHYZgHItl7SHYAGnpAgbf0xwAMNiQ%3D&reserved=0) for our GoFundMe page.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015.

Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this [*petition*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugees-russia-petition-help-b2029261.html) in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Ftopic%2Frefugees-welcome-0&data=04%7C01%7CZoe.Tidman%40independent.co.uk%7C5b489b86c8e0417463c908d9fe8ff3fb%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637820716496412720%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=ohlp8aLFC5nz8A1tTw65suISHdoMyw8zLTl1qkr3Z1g%3D&reserved=0)

**Load-Date:** March 6, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Over 200,000 sign our petition to help refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650R-PG41-F072-4007-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 15, 2022 Tuesday

Third Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 13

**Length:** 589 words

**Byline:** ANDY GREGORY

**Body**

A petition set up by The Independent calling for greater help for Ukrainians seeking refuge from Vladimir Putin's invasion has surpassed 200,000 signatures.

With the war in Ukraine now in its 19th day, the United Nations estimates that 2.8 million people have left the country, many fleeing Russian bombing that has hit residential buildings, kindergartens and hospitals.

Having reported from Ukraine's western borders in the early days of the conflict as hundreds of thousands of people sought to cross into safety, our international correspondent Bel Trew created a petition urging the UK government to be at the forefront in answering their pleas for the world to help.

The petition calls for urgent help in two ways.

It insists that the government must provide more supplies of food, clothing and shelter to care for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** - to be sent to countries that neighbour Ukraine to help those who have been forced to abandon their homes.

In line with The Independent's renewed Refugees Welcome campaign, first set up during the war in Syria in 2015, the petition also urges the UK government to do more to make the UK a safe haven for refugees and to ensure we take in Ukrainians who want to find safety here.

By yesterday evening, more than 200,000 people had put their name to these demands.

The milestone was surpassed shortly after it emerged that - less than an hour after the launch of a new sponsorship scheme - more than 1,500 people in the UK had signed up to host a Ukrainian family in their home.

Following much criticism of the government's response to the unfolding humanitarian crisis, with Boris Johnson refusing to ease visa requirements for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** as every EU country has done, housing secretary Michael Gove yesterday unveiled the new "Homes for Ukraine" scheme.

Under the programme, sponsored Ukrainians will be granted three years' leave to remain in the UK, with entitlement to work and access public services. The government will work with charities, faith groups and universities to match potential hosts with people from Ukraine.

Experts accused the government on Sunday of having initially "misread the public mood about ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***", after an Ipsos poll for The Independent found that three in four Britons backed giving refuge to those fleeing war or persecution.

In evidence of the levels of support for the Ukrainian plight, a campaign set up by The Independent has raised more than £135,000 so far, having surpassed £100,000 in under a week.

It was announced that from 3 March all new funds would go to the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal, which brings together 13 leading UK aid charities providing support overseas, including the Red Cross and Save the Children, whose efforts donations had supported up to that point.

And every donation from our readers to the DEC appeal will be matched pound-for-pound by the UK government, up to £20m.

While Ukrainian and Russian officials are engaged in peace talks, the war shows little sign of slowing, and the scale of suffering in Ukraine continues to grow - with the UN confirming yesterday that 636 civilians have been killed so far in the invasion of Ukraine, and a further 1,125 injured.

Most of these casualties were caused by the use of explosive weapons with a wide impact area, the UN's human rights commissioner's office said.

The actual numbers are believed to be considerably higher, with hundreds of further civilian casualties alleged in recent days in Mariupol, and in the Kharkiv and Donetsk regions.

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Activists arrested after breaking into Biarritz villa of Putin's 'former son-in-law'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650J-MN31-DY4H-K200-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 5:27 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 664 words

**Byline:** Lamiat Sabin

**Highlight:** Police detained two men who occupied the oligarch-owned villa to protest the invasion of Ukraine

**Body**

Two activists have been arrested after breaking into a villa that reportedly belongs to the former son-in-law of Vladimir Putin.

Pierre Haffner and Sergey Saveliev entered the £4 million property and changed the locks over the weekend in [*Biarritz*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/biarritz) , southern France.

Mr Haffner said the occupied villa would be offered to house some of the millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing Mr Putin's war.

The Yellow Vest movement activist also took a selfie standing in the villa's living room.

Fellow activist Mr Saveliev was pictured holding a huge Ukrainian flag while standing on the villa's large balcony and in one of the many bedrooms.

The property has eight bedrooms and three bathrooms, Mr Haffner told Russian news website The Insider.

The activists said they found a copy of the passport of Kirill Shamalov, a Russian billionaire who was once married to Mr Putin's alleged daughter Katerina Tikhonova.

Mr Shamalov has owned the villa since 2012 - according to the French property register seen by The Insider.

French activist Pierre Afner breaks into villa of Putin's daughter in BiarritzAnnounces it is ready to host ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, finds documents belonging to Gennady Timchenko & Kirill Shamalov [*https://t.co/DaO2uJac0Q*](https://t.co/DaO2uJac0Q) [*https://t.co/fLJs01uDDJ*](https://t.co/fLJs01uDDJ) [*pic.twitter.com/8MnxpayD6S*](https://t.co/8MnxpayD6S) - Euromaidan Press (@EuromaidanPress) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/EuromaidanPress/status/1503320329451712514?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

The two activists have been arrested and taken into custody.

Officers broke down the door, arrested the two men, and put them in custody, the Guardian has reported.

Ms Tikhonova, 35, is allegedly Mr Putin's youngest daughter.

The rumour that Mr Putin is her father has not been publicly confirmed as the Russian president keeps a tight lid on his private life.

Her ex-husband Mr Shamalov, 39, is said to be [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's youngest billionaire. The pair were married for five years until 2018, the same year he had been sanctioned by the US.

There are at least two other villas in Biarritz owned by Mr Putin's family and associates, French reports state.

Meanwhile, an anarchist group in London entered a luxury townhouse in Belgravia owned by Russian oligarch Oleg Deripaska.

On Monday, at least four activists from the group known as the London Makhnovists took over the mansion in Belgrave Square, claiming that it now "belongs to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***".

They hung a Ukrainian flag from an upstairs window and unfurled a banner that reads "this property has been liberated".

Another banner reads: "Putin go f\*\*\* yourself."

Deripaska, who owns the property worth more than £2 million, is a Russian billionaire industrialist with close links with the British political establishment. He was targeted by government sanctions last week.

When The Independent asked the activists how long they plan to be at the property, one of the squatters shouted from the balcony: "Until Putin stops the war."

The group is named after the 1917 Ukrainian anarchist movement known as the Makhnovists, which was led by Nestor Ivanovich Makhno.

In response to The Independent asking how they entered the house, the activist joked that the "ghost of Nestor Makhno manifested itself and opened the door."

The activist vowed to "go further" to occupy properties - adding "no more oligarchs' mansions!"

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015.

Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered.

To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Gove says Ukraine hosts show ‘Britain at its best’ but message branded ‘hollow’*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67SB-5C31-JBNF-W07X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2023 Tuesday 12:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 775 words

**Byline:** Aine Fox

**Highlight:** The Homes for Ukraine Scheme anniversary comes amid debate on the Illegal Migration Bill – which would stop asylum seekers who have crossed Channel.

**Body**

[*People*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/people) who have hosted ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the year since a special visa scheme launched have been praised by Housing Secretary [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) as a “wonderful example of British generosity”.

In a video to mark 12 months since the announcement of the Homes for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) scheme, Mr Gove encouraged more people to get involved in “showing [*Britain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britain) at its best”.

But the messaging has been described as “ironic”, coming amid the debate on the Government’s plans to detain and deport migrants who arrive in the UK having crossed the [*Channel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/channel) in small boats and ban them for life from returning to Britain.

Kitty Hamilton, co-founder of the advocacy group Vigil for Visas and host to three ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, said the Illegal Migration Bill “stands in complete contradiction with what the Homes for Ukraine Scheme is about”.

She accused the Government of “categorising one set of refugees as more important than another” and said while Ukrainians are being welcomed in, those fleeing war and persecution in countries such as Syria and Yemen are not.

Since it officially opened on March 18 last year, a few days after being announced, some 117,100 people have arrived in the UK under the Homes for Ukraine visa scheme.

Ukrainians who come via this route can live, work and study in the UK and access public funds.

If you can play your part by opening your home to a Ukrainian who is fleeing persecution ... we would be showing Britain at its best

Housing Secretary Michael Gove

In a video released on Tuesday, Mr Gove said ***Ukrainian refugees*** had been “taken into the hearts and the homes of people who have been so generous in offering support to those fleeing persecution”.

He added: “I want to say thank you to everyone who has acted as a host and been such a wonderful, wonderful example of British generosity in showing what we can do to support people in their most difficult hour.

“I also want to say thank you to all those Ukrainian citizens who have contributed so much to our national life in the last year and I want to say to everyone, if you can play your part in the months ahead – as Ukraine faces many more difficult days and weeks – if you can play your part by opening your home to a Ukrainian who is fleeing persecution then I would be so grateful, they would be so grateful, we would be showing Britain at its best.

“To all of you who have been so generous in the past and to those of you thinking about what you might be able to do in the future, thank you!”

Ms Hamilton noted two Government recruitment logos which she had been sent as part of a roundtable discussion on how to attract more hosts under the scheme and said the wording of the planned social media campaign was “ironic”.

There is something wrong with a system that results in categorisation of refugees – that we are categorising one set of refugees as more important than another

Kitty Hamilton, Vigil for Visas

One of the logos read: “Help transform the lives of people who have fled the devastating war in Ukraine.”

Ms Hamilton, who has had a Ukrainian mother and her two children living in her home since May, said: “Replace it (Ukraine) with Syria, replace it with Yemen, replace it with any number of different countries.

“There is no difference for people fleeing devastating war.”

She questioned the “unfairness” of the system and said if all refugees were allowed “to work from the day they get here – this would be such a good thing for the country as a whole”.

She added: “There is something wrong with a system that results in categorisation of refugees – that we are categorising one set of refugees as more important than another.”

She said she believed, despite a number of difficulties along the way, the Ukraine scheme had been successful but said while the Government was right to acknowledge that more hosts were needed “the timing is terrible and the messages sound hollow”.

She said: “How can we, hand on heart, talk about getting people to transform the lives of people who have fled the devastating war in Ukraine, how can we hand on heart say that to the people of Ukraine and not others?

“The unfairness of the scheme is not the fault of the hosts. We would love to have this scheme available to all so that we have a choice.”

A Government spokesperson said the UK “has a proud history of providing safe and legal routes for those who genuinely need it” and is “committed to creating more routes to safety for vulnerable people across the globe”.

They added: “But we must first grip the rise in illegal migration and stop the boats, which is why we are introducing new legislation that will see people who come to the UK illegally, liable for detention and swift removal.”

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2023

**End of Document**



[*13-year-old refugee girl sent back to Ukraine after Home Office refused visa, says Labour MP*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65MW-8TX1-DY4H-K4K2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 8, 2022 Wednesday 1:32 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:4

**Length:** 626 words

**Byline:** Adam Forrest

**Highlight:** Boris Johnson told in Commons of ‘shameful’ case of two sisters being split apart

**Body**

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) has promised that home secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) will look into the case of a 13-year-old Ukrainian girl forced back into the war zone after the UK government “refused” to process her application.

Labour MP [*Tulip Siddiq*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tulip-siddiq) told the prime minister that a constituent had tried to provide a home to the 13-year-old girl and her 18-year-old sister – but [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) bureaucracy had split the family apart.

She said the two Ukrainian sisters had been housed in “dangerous temporary accommodation” in Montenegro for several weeks while waiting to hear if they would be accepted under the UK’s sponsorship scheme.

“The House Office refused to process the application of the younger sister because she is 13 and travelling without her parents, even though she had her 18-year-old sister with her,” the senior Labour MP said during PMQs.

The shadow Treasury minister told the Commons: “The 18-year-old sister is now in London and the 13-year-old sister has been sent back to her hometown in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , which is under siege.”

She added: “Can the prime minister can he tell me, hand on heart, does he think sending vulnerable children back to a war zone is the right policy?”

Mr Johnson pledged that Ms Patel would examine the case. “I understand her indignation about the case she mentions, and I know that my right honourable friend the home secretary will be looking into it,” he said.

Another Labour MP shouted “shameful!” in the Commons chamber after the case was raised.

Lawyers helping ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** try to reach the UK have warned that many families faced being “split up” under existing visa routes. Children under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a legal guardian to be granted a separate visa.

In the case of the 13-year-old Ukrainian girl, her parents – a doctor and member of the military who wish to stay to help in their nation’s war effort – were not able to make their 18-year-old daughter the legal guardian.

Forced to bring their youngest child back from Montenegro, they have now made a new application to the UK sponsorship scheme based on a series of guardianship documents.

Ms Siddiq later told The Independent the government’s “callous” policy was still not “sophisticated” enough to prevent families from being separated.

“It is frankly disgraceful that our government’s policy appears to be to do nothing for Ukrainian minors travelling without their parents – even when they are accompanied by other adult relatives,” she said.

The Labour MP added: “The government is putting many children in grave danger and forcing them to return to areas that are under constant attack by Russia,” adding that it was time for the PM to “sort it out”.

Although more than 120,000 visas have been issued to those who have fled the Russian invasion, the refugees minister revealed on Tuesday that there are still almost 20,000 Ukrainians waiting for a UK visa application to be completed.

Lord Harrington told the upper chamber that 65,7000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have arrived in the UK since the start of the war in February. He said 19,000 were still waiting in cases involving “different levels of complexity”.

The minister also refused to say if those fleeing that warzone could be sent to Rwanda if they arrive by routes deemed “illegal”.

The Home Office has doubled the time lone child refugees must wait to join family members in the UK as resources are diverted to processing Ukraine visas, [*The Independent revealed last month*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/child-refugees-visas-waiting-time-ukraine-uk-b2077384.html%22%20title=%22Home%20Office%20doubles%20time%20lone%20child%20refugees%20must%20wait%20to%20join%20family%20in%20UK%20as%20resources%20diverted%20to%20Ukraine).

The department has increased its service standard for family visas, which include family reunion applications for minors, from 12 weeks to 24 weeks.

Lawyers and campaigners said the increased delays were “not inevitable” and the Home Office could have avoided them by removing “unnecessary red tape” for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

**Load-Date:** June 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*13-year-old refugee girl sent back to Ukraine after Home Office refused visa, says Labour MP*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65MX-8PG1-JBNF-W510-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 8, 2022 Wednesday 6:52 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK NEWS,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:1

**Length:** 626 words

**Byline:** Adam Forrest

**Highlight:** Boris Johnson told in Commons of ‘shameful’ case of two sisters being split apart

**Body**

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) has promised that home secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) will look into the case of a 13-year-old Ukrainian girl forced back into the war zone after the UK government “refused” to process her application.

Labour MP [*Tulip Siddiq*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tulip-siddiq) told the prime minister that a constituent had tried to provide a home to the 13-year-old girl and her 18-year-old sister – but [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) bureaucracy had split the family apart.

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**Load-Date:** June 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Japan's foreign minister visits Poland to strengthen ties with the NATO nation*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B2C-2Y71-JBNF-W4GF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

January 8, 2024 Monday 4:22 PM GMT

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**Length:** 326 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa has paid a visit to Poland in an attempt to strengthen ties with the NATO nation which borders Ukraine

**Body**

[*Japanese*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/japan) Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa met with top officials in Poland on Monday to strengthen ties with the NATO nation, which borders [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Kamikawa conferred with Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski in [*Warsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warsaw) and a placed a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. She also was scheduled to meet President Andrzej Duda.

She began her visit to Poland on Saturday, but interrupted it to make an unannounced visit to Ukraine, where she pledged Japan’s continued support for the country as it tries to defend itself against Russia's full-scale invasion. Japan announced during her visit that it would contribute $37 million to the NATO trust fund to provide Ukraine with drone detection systems.

In Warsaw, Kamikawa told reporters during a short news briefing that she went to Ukraine to show Japan's “enduring solidarity with Ukraine” and praised Poland for its role in helping ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

"Japan will continue to work with Poland to end Russia’s aggression against Ukraine as soon as possible and to bring a just and lasting peace to Ukraine,” she said, in comments translated by an interpreter.

Both she and Sikorski said at a news conference that Japan and Poland are strong strategic partners who intend to strengthen their ties further.

Kamikawa said that the two countries are united by their values and principles, and noted that their talks also focused on the situation in East Asia.

Sikorski said that he expressed condolences to the minister over an earthquake on the Noto Peninsula that left at least 168 dead and dozens missing and a deadly collision of a large passenger plane and a Japanese coast guard aircraft.

“I have already expressed our condolences to the minister for the tragic earthquake on the Noto Peninsula and for the airplane accident, while congratulating her on such a smooth evacuation, thanks to which so many human lives were saved. I assure you of our solidarity with Japan in these difficult times," Sikorski said.

**Load-Date:** January 8, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Refugees Welcome appeal reaches 250,000 signatures*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:657R-88P1-F072-42XR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

April 17, 2022 Sunday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 3

**Length:** 953 words

**Byline:** RORY SULLIVAN

**Body**

More than 250,000 people have signedThe Independent's petition urging the UK government to step up support for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

The milestone reached by the Refugees Welcome appeal has fuelled calls for Boris Johnson to listen to the public and open up Britain to those fleeing conflict.

The Independent launched the campaign just days after Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February. Since then 10 million civilians have been displaced and many thousands killed by Vladimir Putin's war.

Refugees Welcome is pushing ministers to provide more food, clothing and shelter to care for refugees who have fled Ukraine to countries across Europe. It is also calling on Mr Johnson's government to do more to make Britain a safe haven for those escaping the conflict.

The UK launched its Home for Ukraine refugee scheme last month but it has been beset by red tape and delays which have led to ministers being accused of "squandering" the generosity of the British public. Although more than 200,000 Britons have registered to host refugees and 55,600 Ukrainians signing up, just 3,200 refugees have arrived in the country through the scheme. Critics have blamed over complex applications forms, difficulty matching sponsors with applicants, and lengthy delays.

Former cabinet minister Robert Jenrick, who this week became the first MP to welcome ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** into his home through the sponsorship scheme, criticised the process as "overly bureaucratic". He said the Home Office had failed to get "simple things" right, such as providing an application form in Ukrainian.

Priti Patel, the home secretary, has apologised for the "frustration" caused by how long it is taking for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to arrive in the UK under visa schemes, while refugees minister Richard Harrington admitted during a radio intervew last month that it was "embarrassing" the programme was "taking so long" to put in place.

Alistair Carmichael, the Liberal Democrat spokesperson on home affairs, said the emphatic response to the The Independent's petition showed "the people of the UK welcome refugees - if only our government would get out of the way".

Writing in The Independent in a week in which the government announced controversial plans to fly asylum seekers more than 6,400km (4,000 miles) to Rwanda to be processed, he added: "If you look at the collective response of thousands upon thousands of families across this country to the crisis created by Vladimir Putin's invasion of UKraine, it rather belies that cruel and close-minded approach taken by Boris Johnson and Priti Patel."

Change.org, which is hosting the Refugees Welcome petition, said it was one of the largest started in the UK this year and had attracted support "from all corners of the country".

Alongside the petition, The Independent has raised more than £145,000 for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, exceeding its original target of £100,000. The appeal has now jointly raised more than £400,000 along with our sister title the Evening Standard and £56,000 of matched funding from the government.

Initially, donations went to the Red Cross and Save the Children. But since 3 March, they have been split more widely, with all funds going towards the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), which supports more than a dozen NGOs with their relief work.

Readers' outpouring of genorosity has been fuelled by moving images of Ukrainian citizens fleeing their devastated country in their millions.

In less than seven weeks, more than 4.7 million people have travelled across the Ukrainian border into neighbouring countries, according to the UN, with many facing dangerous journeys to reach safety. The number of Ukrainians who have been forced by Putin's bombardment to flee their homes is estimated to be more than 10 million.

Ekataryn Velychko, 35, a mother who escaped from besieged Mariupol with her daughter Anastasia, 8, and son Radion, 5, reached Hungary last month.

"I have come from hell on earth," she told The Independent. "For weeks we were in the basement with no water, no food, no electricity and no gas. My house is destroyed, the city is 90 per cent destroyed. Most people cannot get out. It is terrifying. My children are completely broken."

Nearly two-thirds of all Ukrainian children have been made homeless since Russian troops invaded, with Unicef describing the scale of this displacement as "quite incredible".

Bel Trew, one of The Independent's correspondents in Ukraine, has seen the horrors of Russia's war in Ukraine up close. She has witnessed families walking for miles in freezing conditions in a bid to reach the border and children separated from their parents "making the terrifying journey to safety alone".

"Every single one of them pleaded for the world to help," she said.

Money raised by the Refugees Welcome appeal goes to the DEC's 13 member charities, which are: Action Against Hunger, ActionAid UK, Age International, British Red Cross, CAFOD, CARE International UK, Christian Aid, Concern Worldwide UK, International Rescue Committee UK, Oxfam, Save the Children UK, Plan International UK, and World Vision UK.

Every donation from our readers to the DEC appeal is matched pound-for-pound by the UK government, up to £20m.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, click here. To sign the petition click here. If you would like to donate then please click here for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** April 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Duke of Edinburgh tells Ukrainians Britain can be home for as long they need*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67RJ-DF51-DY4H-K4D0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 10, 2023 Friday 6:44 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 497 words

**Byline:** Lauren Gilmour

**Highlight:** The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh made their first official visit to the city in their new roles on Friday.

**Body**

The new Duke of [*Edinburgh*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/edinburgh) told ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** he hoped they could make [*Scotland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scotland) their home for as long as they felt they needed as he attended a reception marking one year since the Scottish capital welcomed the first Ukrainians to the city.

In his first official engagement in the role after the King appointed him, Edward addressed refugees at a reception in Edinburgh’s City Chambers on the Royal Mile on Friday.

He said: “I hope you can all try to make Scotland and [*Britain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britain) your home for as long you feel that you need to stay here and we will try to make it as welcoming and as safe as possible for you.

“I wish you all the very best in the future and we’re thinking of you.

The duke, who had the title conferred upon him on Friday by the King, marking his 59th birthday, said he and his wife Sophie were “slightly overwhelmed” by the appointment.

He said: “Thank you for welcoming us to Edinburgh today on, indeed, a very special and very overwhelming day for now my wife and duchess,” he joked, while looking at his wife.

He added: “I also want to express my thanks to everybody who has worked so hard to make our Ukrainian friends so welcome.”

Before making their way into the City Chambers, Edward and Sophie stopped to greet the hundreds of well-wishers gathered on the Royal Mile on the cold, but sunny afternoon.

Many of them were tourists on holiday in Edinburgh from as far away as Washington DC.

The Duke and Duchess were greeted by a traditional Scottish piper playing Ukrainian music as members of the public greeted them both, congratulating Edward on his appointment as Duke of Edinburgh, the role his father held until his death in 2021.

Lord Provost of Edinburgh Robert Aldridge congratulated Edward and welcomed him to Edinburgh’s City Chambers before they climbed the building’s famous staircase.

They met council officials including council leader Cammy Day.

Running slightly late, the duke shared a joke with one official about the roadworks in Edinburgh and said he had “come to drop some hints” about it.

He then met ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have settled in Edinburgh, telling one: “I can’t believe we are a year on” and asking if she was able to have contact with her family back in Ukraine and if they were being well looked after in the city.

I hope you can all try to make Scotland and Britain your home for as long you feel that you need to stay here and we will try to make it as welcoming and as safe as possible for you. I wish you all the very best in the future and we're thinking of you

Duke of Edinburgh

Edward was then presented with a birthday gift before moving through the crowd and addressing those who had gathered.

A Ukrainian choir then sang a Ukrainian song and the traditional Ukrainian “Happy Birthday” song.

The reception finished with an emotional rendition by the piper of the Ukrainian national anthem before Edward and Sophie were presented with a bouquet of sunflowers by 10-year-old Marianna Melnyk, dressed in the Ukrainian national dress.

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Who is in the royal box at Wimbledon today?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65SY-D1C1-JBNF-W4GG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 27, 2022 Monday 5:04 PM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 376 words

**Byline:** Joanna Whitehead

**Highlight:** Covid heroes, and stars of sport and space are guests in Monday’s Wimbledon Royal Box

**Body**

Prince Michael of Kent, the ambassador of Ukraine to the UK, Vadym Prystaiko, former [*Wimbledon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wimbledon) champion, Martina Navratilova, and TV quiz show hosts [*Richard Osman*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/richard-osman) and [*Alexander Armstrong*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/alexander-armstrong) are just some of the guests in the Royal Box on the opening day of the 2022 Wimbledon tournament.

The Royal Box, which is located on Centre Court at the legendary SW19 sports venue, has 74 seats reserved for the royal family and invited guests of the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club (AELTC).

Wimbledon organisers handed out [*hundreds of free tickets to* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/tennis/wimbledon-tickets-free-ukraine-refugees-b2107957.html) in a bid to welcome them to their new homes last week.

In a couple of weeks, the special ticketholders will be able to spend the day at No.1 Court, an opportunity to see some “amazing tennis”, according to Wimbledon Foundation head Paige Murphy.

She said: “It’s an incredibly proud moment for us – it’s really part of our mission… to give people a really special experience after a really traumatic few months.

“To be able to provide a unique day when they can hopefully have a bit of respite and really get some enjoyment out of it is incredibly inspiring for us.”

Who is in the Royal Box?

Other attendees include Dr Ruth March, senior vice-president at AstraZeneca, who was awarded an OBE earlier this year for her role in developing mass diagnostic tests for Covid-19.

Madelaine McTernan, the government’s new HRT Tsar who previously led the Vaccine Taskforce is also in attendance, as is the University of Oxford’s Dr Catherine Green, who helped develop the Covid-19 vaccine.

Consultant medical virologist Dr Malur Sudhanva of King’s College Hospital who was awarded an OBE for services to healthcare and science during the Covid-19 pandemic is also a guest in the box.

Astronaut Sir Tim Peake and former Formula One driver Sir Jackie Stewart are also present.

Other guests inside Monday’s Royal Box include:

Matt Downie: CEO of homeless charity Crisis

Slawek Szczepanski: Director of the Polish Family Association, which cares for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving in Poland and the UK

Natalie O’Rourke: Owner of Park Lane Stables for the Disabled in Teddington

Fairfax Hall and Sam Galsworthy: Founders of Sipsmith Gin

Roula Khalef: Editor of Financial Times

**Load-Date:** June 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Sarah, Duchess of York travels to Poland after organising help for refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6516-PY61-DY4H-K199-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 17, 2022 Thursday 6:10 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 326 words

**Byline:** Tony Jones

**Highlight:** More than 1.7 million people - out of a total of almost three million refugees - have crossed Ukraine's border with Poland.

**Body**

Sarah, Duchess of [*York*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/york) has made a humanitarian trip to [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) after organising lorry loads of donated goods to support ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the Russian invasion.

The duchess described the impact of the war on families as "unbearable to see" and said she wanted to "do my bit" to help Poland respond to the crisis.

Speaking from [*Warsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warsaw) , where she is being hosted by the city's mayor Rafal Trzaskowski, she said: "This conflict is absolutely heartbreaking to watch. It is unbearable to see families being separated and civilians being caught up in the bloodshed.

The invasion of Ukraine is heartbreaking to watch. So many families are being separated and displaced. I'm honoured to be welcomed to Poland today by [*@trzaskowski\_*](https://twitter.com/trzaskowski_?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) and meeting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. Poland has taken in at least 1.7m so far [*pic.twitter.com/owqCXxN3UA*](https://t.co/owqCXxN3UA) - Sarah Ferguson (@SarahTheDuchess) [*March 17, 2022*](https://twitter.com/SarahTheDuchess/status/1504490171957452801?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

"I have always believed the smile of a child is the most important thing in the world, so to see so many children caught up in this crisis is particularly affecting."

She explained more than 1.7 million people - out of a total of almost three million refugees - have crossed Ukraine's border with Poland and the reception they received "has been inspiring to watch".

Sarah added: "I want to do my bit through my charity, Sarah's Trust, and am here to hear more about what is needed on the ground.

"So far we have organised for three articulated lorries with supplies designed to help refugees from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) in Poland. These include clothes for women, children, nappies, hand sanitisers, toiletries, torches, and non-perishable food like porridge oats.

"All of these items have been provided by kind-hearted donors in the UK who I can't thank enough.

"I think those of us in countries further away have a duty to help the Polish people respond to this crisis. [*Two*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/two) of our lorries have gone to Rudy and Czeladz, and the third one will go to the Silesia region."

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Italy baker makes 'peace' bread, sweets for Ukraine refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651M-9K61-DY4H-K19R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 19, 2022 Saturday 4:40 PM GMT

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**Length:** 332 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** A small bakery in northern Italy is trying to do its part to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the Russian invasion

**Body**

A small bakery in northern Italy is trying to do its part to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the Russian invasion.

Baker Matteo Cunsolo is making and selling "peace bread" in the blue and yellow colors of the Ukrainian flag, with proceeds going to a charitable fund helping refugees who cross into Italy or who are remaining in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

In addition, Cunsolo and area bakers have made 600 kilograms (1,325 pounds) of cookies to give out to young refugees. He plans to bring the sweets, along with a truck full of locally donated diapers, food, medicine and clothes, to the Ukrainian-[*Polish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/polish) border next week.

"After running away from the bombs, perhaps travelling across forests by night in the cold, I think a cookie is like a little cuddle that can help bring a smile on a child's face," he said, standing in front of his industrial-sized oven at La Panetteria in Parabiago, near [*Milan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/milan).

Cunsolo said he got the idea to bake after watching a TV report about the reception Ukrainians were receiving at the Polish border: They were given something warm to drink and a piece of bread.

"When I heard the word bread I thought - 'OK I am a baker, what can I do to help?'"

He uses natural food coloring to make the bread: saffron to color the dough yellow, and an infusion made from the leaves of the blue butterfly pea flower, or clitoria ternatea, to get the blue. Once baked, he uses a butter-based spray and a "PEACE" stencil to decorate each loaf.

"It's a really important initiative," said customer Maria Pascolin as she shopped at the bakery. "It's a drop in the ocean, but if we all gave a contribution, it would help."

Cunsolo is making about 20 kilograms (44 pounds) of "peace bread" per day, and so far has raised more than 2,000 euros ($2,214) for the local Lion's Club charity drive.

"I believe in trying to help others in any way you can," he said.

\_\_\_

Nicole Winfield in Rome contributed.

\_\_\_

Follow all [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) stories about the Russian invasion of Ukraine at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine).

**Load-Date:** March 19, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine sponsorship scheme process 'putting women and children in danger'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6522-DW01-DY4H-K4P8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 21, 2022 Monday 5:38 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 904 words

**Byline:** Jemma Crew

**Highlight:** A volunteer in Poland said the visa application process for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** is "too complicated and difficult and too lengthy".

**Body**

The visa application process for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** is putting vulnerable women and children in danger because it is "too complicated and difficult and too lengthy", a British volunteer in [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) has said.

Ruth McMenamin has been welcoming refugees arriving at Warsaw central station, where volunteers are providing meals, toiletries, Polish sim cards and healthcare support.

During a call with the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) helpline at the weekend, she said she was told that it will take around a week for those who have applied under the sponsorship scheme to get paperwork so they can travel.

The new scheme - for Ukrainians without UK family members - opened for applications on Friday.

A [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) spokeswoman said officials are moving "as quickly as possible" to help people fleeing [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) find safety in the UK, and that call handlers are not giving out "exact timescales to complete an application".

In guidance issued on Friday, ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** were told not to travel to the UK until they receive a decision on their application.

Ms McMenamin said the wait "poses very real dangers for women and children" and is "not good enough".

The 34-year-old from Bristol told the PA news agency: "The [*UK Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk-government) needs to put more resources behind this to speed it up.

"The length of the process is putting women and children in danger."

Ms McMenamin is on a three-month sabbatical from her job in marketing and travelled to Poland 10 days ago to help people fleeing Ukraine.

A private space has been cordoned off at the station so women and children can rest safely, she said, however it has limited capacity so women are still being forced to sleep on the station floor while they wait.

There have been reports of sexual assault and trafficking and posters have gone up in the station warning of the risks, she said.

There is no sign of British officials at the station to help people with their applications, Ms McMenamin said.

She added: "What we're finding is that people are willing to go elsewhere because it's easier and safer to do so."

Edward Pinkney, a 34-year-old from Middlesbrough who is also volunteering at the station, said: "Most people are wanting to head to other European countries because the UK arrival process is quite complicated and it's unclear how long they will have to wait. They want to get to safety as quickly as possible."

PA has asked the [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities how many applications under the scheme have been made, how many have been approved, and how long it expects people will need to wait between submitting their application and receiving paperwork enabling them to travel to the UK.

No figures have so far been provided. But it is understood some visas have already been granted under the sponsorship scheme and that data will be published in due course.

Officials believe the process is speeding up and that there are sufficient caseworkers for both schemes to ensure visas can be issued as soon as possible.

The Government said it is moving "as quickly as possible to ensure that those fleeing horrific persecution in Ukraine can find safety in the UK".

A spokeswoman said: "The UKVI helpline advises people on what support is available to them.

"It is incorrect to say UKVI call handlers give out exact timescales to complete an application - they are processed as quickly as possible but this may vary depending on a variety of factors."

Refugees at Home, a charity which connects people who have a spare room with refugees and asylum seekers in search of somewhere to stay, said it was receiving dozens of enquires from Ukrainians seeking advice.

Meanwhile the Home Office said it had issued 10,200 visas under the Ukraine family scheme as of 4pm on Sunday. A total of 31,500 applications have been submitted so far, according to provisional data published on the department's website.

Enver Solomon, chief executive of the Refugee Council, said: "We remain deeply concerned that the Ukraine Family scheme aimed at supporting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** is too slow and complex to help some of the most vulnerable refugees, such as children who are alone and may find it difficult to apply for a visa.

"As we have since the beginning of this dreadful conflict, we continue our plea to Government to waive all visa requirements for Ukrainians - just as our EU neighbours have - so that all those who want to come to the UK can do so quickly. Security checks could easily be carried out on arrival.

"What is vital is that people can flee the bombing and shelling quickly and easily as possible."

Tim Naor Hilton, chief executive of Refugee Action, said: "Refugees should not be stuck for weeks at borders while they wait for paperwork.

"This shambles shows it was totally inappropriate for the Government to rely on visas to help people flee the Russian invasion.

"It must learn its lesson and create an ambitious refugee resettlement programme that prioritises those most in need and is ready to go as soon as a crisis such as Ukraine or Afghanistan happens.

"And while it's incredible that so many people are willing to open up their homes to refugees, we are terrified the free-for-all matching process is wide open to be exploited by people traffickers and other people happy to prey on vulnerable refugees.

"Ministers must step in and properly regulate sponsor matching to make sure that vulnerable people who have come here for protection are safe."

**Load-Date:** March 21, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'Still major gaps' in Ukraine visa scheme despite Home Office U-turn*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YP-KGH1-JBNF-W2B9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 10, 2022 Thursday 4:38 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:5

**Length:** 1267 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Experts warn refugees will still have to go through 'confusing' online process and may face long delays

**Body**

[*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) 's changes to Britain's scheme for ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) do not go "anywhere near far enough" to give proper support to those fleeing conflict, the government has been warned.

In a move to simplify the system, the home secretary announced that, from Tuesday, those who have fled the Russian invasion and have [*passports*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/passports) will no longer need to go to a visa application centre to submit their fingerprints and documents before they come to the UK.

But experts have said there are "still major gaps" in the government's support for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, warning that people would still be required to go through a "chaotic and frustrating" online application process and calling for "urgent clarity" on who will benefit in practice.

Lawyers said many Ukrainians do not currently have passports and are still likely to seek out visa application centres for help with the "confusing" process of filling out applications.

The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome campaign*](https://www.gofundme.com/f/refugeeswelcome) is calling for the government to go further and faster to help Ukrainians fleeing the war, with more than 183,000 people signing [*our petition*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) asking ministers to provide more supplies of food, clothing and shelter for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and to do more to make the UK a safe haven for them.

[*Announcing the change*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-passport-uk-visa-russia-b2032786.html) in the House of Commons on Thursday, the home secretary said it would mean visa application centres across Europe could "focus their efforts on helping Ukrainians without passports".

It is not clear how many Ukrainians do not have passports. In the five years to 2021, 16.6 million Ukrainians were issued an international passport, of a population of 44 million.

The announcement came amid mounting concerns about "unnecessary delays and bureaucracy" in the visa application process for the UK's family visa scheme, which was opened last Friday. Many refugees have been forced to [*wait for hours in the cold*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugees-poland-uk-visa-home-office-b2031118.html) and [*travel for miles*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukrainian-refugees-visa-warsaw-rzeszow-uk-b2032259.html) in order to complete the requirement of submitting their biometric information.

Changes to the UK's scheme were followed by reports that the British public will be asked to offer homes to tens of thousands of Ukrainians fleeing war.

According to the Daily Telegraph, ministers will this weekend launch a hotline and webpage allowing individuals, charities, businesses and community groups to offer rooms to refugees who have no family links to the UK.

The Independent has set up a petition calling on the UK government to be at the forefront of the international community offering aid and support to those in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) .

Shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper said the changes to the scheme would be a "relief for many", but that they "don't yet go far enough".

"There will still be problems at visa centres and many people [are] still excluded from help. The chaotic government response puts us to shame," she said.

Kerry Garcia, head of immigration at law firm Stevens & Bolton, who is supporting eight Ukrainians with UK visa applications on a pro bono basis, told The Independent that while the change was "helpful", it did not remove the requirement for people who have fled conflict to go through a "confusing and frustrating" online application system in order to apply.

"People still need to access an online system that doesn't work very well at the best of time. It is not fit for purpose for this many applications being submitted at the same time. It crashes, you can't upload documents," she said.

"There are all sorts of practical difficulties. This is a system designed for normal system of immigration, not for a refugee crisis."

Ms Garcia, whose Ukrainian clients have all now submitted their online applications but have not yet had their visa appointments because there are often none available for weeks, said ministers must also "clarify urgently" how the change would affect people in practice.

"In particular they must clarify how it affects people who have already applied, how the system will work in terms of processing documents, and also anticipated processing times. It's one thing to say you can now apply digitally, but the big question is how long do you have to wait in your Airbnb using up in some cases your life savings?" she said.

Amy Stokes, head of business immigration at Forbes Solicitors, said digital visas would do little to avoid the need for Ukrainians to make their applications in person at visa application centres.

"Applying digitally sounds great in theory but will do little to stem the confusion about whether a person meets the visa eligibility criteria," she said.

It comes after Ukraine's ambassador to the UK Vadym Prystaiko [*told MPs on Wednesday*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-russia-invasion-refugees-visa-uk-b2031832.html) that if bureaucratic procedures in the visa scheme were "simplified" it would "definitely resolve all the issues".

Marley Morris, IPPR associate director for migration, trade and communities, said there were "still major gaps" in the UK's support for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

"The government should follow the lead of Canada and the EU by offering temporary protection to all Ukrainians who want to apply. At the same time, it should urgently investigate how to further streamline the visa process, or simply lift visa requirements altogether," he added.

Madeleine Sumption, director of the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford, said: "It was clear from government data that securing in-person appointments was one of the obstacles preventing eligible Ukrainians from getting a visa to come to the UK.

"However, it was only one of the factors - and there are still other bottlenecks, including the need to gather all the documents and information required to prove eligibility. The next big question is how quickly the [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) will be able to ramp-up processing as the applications increase."

Boris Johnson insisted the visa scheme was as "light touch" as possible but stressed the need for security checks on people fleeing Ukraine.

He told reporters on Thursday: "I think people do understand that when you have got large numbers of people leaving from a war zone - some of them still armed, perhaps not all of their identities completely clear, their motivations completely clear - it is responsible to have checks."

"More than a thousand" visas had been granted by Wednesday and the numbers were going to "climb very steeply", Mr Johnson said.

But Andy Hewett, head of advocacy at the Refugee Council, said the change to the visa scheme did not go "anywhere near far enough".

He added: "Rather than continuing with a system that requires ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to apply for a visa, the government urgently needs to temporarily waive visa requirements so that all Ukrainian families fleeing war and bloodshed can easily reach the UK and access the protection that is their fundamental right under the Refugee Convention."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine war: Refugees Welcome campaign reaches milestone 250,000 signatures*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:657B-PCJ1-JBNF-W285-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 15, 2022 Friday 11:59 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:7

**Length:** 704 words

**Byline:** Rory Sullivan

**Highlight:** Refugees Welcome: Boris Johnson urged to take notice of public support for refugees as petition passes milestone

**Body**

The Independent's petition calling on the [*UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk) government to increase its support for ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) has now received more than 250,000 signatures.

Launched shortly after Russia invaded its neighbour on 24 February, the [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome) appeal reached its latest milestone earlier this week.

The campaign aims to get ministers to provide more food, clothing and shelter to care for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** across Europe. It also seeks to encourage Boris Johnson's government to do more to make Britain a safe haven for those fleeing the conflict.

Responding to the 250,000 signatures, Change.org said: "The Independent's petition calling for urgent support for refugees from Ukraine, has become one of the largest petitions to be started in the UK this year.

"It reached over 100,000 signatures in the first 48 hours after it was published, and since has continued to grow, with people from all corners of the country signing to show solidarity and call for government action."

Alongside the petition, The Independent has raised more than £145,000 for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, which exceeded our orginial target of £100,000. We have now jointly raised more than £400,000 along with our sister title the Evening Standard and also with £56,000 of match funding from the government.

Initially, donations went to the Red Cross and Save the Children. But since 3 March, they have been split more widely, with all funds going towards the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), which supports more than a dozen NGOs with their relief work.

The DEC's 13 member charities are: Action Against Hunger, ActionAid UK, Age International, British Red Cross, CAFOD, CARE International UK, Christian Aid, Concern Worldwide UK, International Rescue Committee UK, Oxfam, Save the Children UK, Plan International UK, and World Vision UK.

Every donation from our readers to the DEC appeal was matched pound-for-pound by the UK government, up to £20m.

The sight of civilians fleeing their war-torn country have stirred hearts across the world, leading to an outpouring of generosity.

In less than seven weeks, a total of 4,736,471 people have travelled across the Ukrainian border into neighbouring countries, according to the UN. They often face dangerous journeys to reach safety.

Nearly two-thirds of all Ukrainian children have now been forced to flee their homes since Russian troops invaded, with Unicef describing the scale of this displacement as "quite incredible".

The humanitarian situation in Ukraine remains dire, particularly in the long-besieged city of Mariupol, where tens of thousands of residents are thought to be in need of critical assistance.

The Independent has set up a petition calling on the UK government to be at the forefront of the international community offering aid and support to those in Ukraine. To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees/u/30286981) .

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has recorded 4,577 civilian fatalities in Ukraine, but acknowledges the true death toll is likely to be much higher.

Last month, Ekataryn Velychko, 35, a mother who had escaped from Mariupol with her daughter Anastasia, 8, and son Radion, 5, reached Hungary.

"I have come from hell on earth," she told The Independent. "For weeks we were in the basement with no water, no food, no electricity and no gas. My house is destroyed, the city is 90 per cent destroyed. Most people cannot get out. It is terrifying. My children are completely broken."

Bel Trew, one of our reporters in Ukraine, has seen the horrors of Russia's war in Ukraine up close. "I have watched families walk 50km through the snow to the border. Many are battling through freezing conditions, carrying their children, their pets and scant belongings; all to try to get to safety.

She added: "I have spoken to teenagers and to children who were separated from their parents in the chaotic efforts to flee, who are now making the terrifying journey to safety - alone.

"I have spoken to people stuck in the cities under bombardment, who are unable to get out and are now struggling to find food, water and shelter.

"Every single one of them pleaded for the world to help."

**Load-Date:** April 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'I have come from hell on earth': The Ukrainian refugees reaching the Hungarian border*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:653H-2SB1-JBNF-W408-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 28, 2022 Monday 11:14 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:3

**Length:** 1777 words

**Byline:** David Cohen

**Highlight:** REFUGEES WELCOME APPEAL : The sea of refugees flooding the Hungary/Ukraine border have spoken to campaigns editor David Cohen about the horrors they have faced in recent weeks

**Body**

As the train from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) pulled into platform 5 at Zhony railway station on the Hungarian border, a dozen police boarded and began to process the refugees, family by family.

One of the first to alight, her face gaunt and stricken, was Ekataryn Velychko, 35, a mother who had escaped from Mariupol with her daughter Anastasia, 8, and son Radion, 5.

"I have come from hell on earth," she said. "For weeks we were in the basement with no water, no food, no electricity and no gas. My house is destroyed, the city is 90 per cent destroyed. Most people cannot get out. It is terrifying. My children are completely broken."

Next to disembark was a heavily pregnant mother, Anna, also 35, with her son, Dima, 7, and her weeping mother Valentina, 70, three generations looking shattered after a 36-hour ordeal fleeing their city west of Kyiv.

"We were living in the basement under constant bombing for ten days," said Anna. "We saw horrible things. Mothers giving birth to their children in the basement. I didn't want it to happen to me."

As family after family crossed the tracks towing their luggage towards the concrete concourse, others passed in the opposite direction. The others had arrived from Ukraine three hours earlier and were now boarding an onward train for Budapest.

Many, like veterinary surgeon Natalia Shulhan, 36, and her daughter Sonya, 7, were calm despite having been on the road for a week after fleeing Chernihiv, a city near Kyiv surrounded by Russian forces, as was Natalia's case.

She said: "Our train from Kyiv to Chop and across the border into Zahony took 17 hours. Sometimes it stopped for hours in the middle of nowhere and we were scared we would be bombed. My daughter is very terrified and has been crying a lot so we're trying to get as far from the bombs and Ukraine as possible. The Russians behave like Nazis, like animals, I hate them. We are going to Budapest and on to Austria, but we don't know anyone in Austria."

The difference in mood between the fraught, exhausted, tense refugees arriving and those leaving just a little lighter a few hours later was palpable, and the reason immediately apparent. From the moment they stepped off the train, around 30 aid workers and volunteers from around the world surged forward to carry their bags, assist mothers with babies, provide food, drinks, women's hygiene products, toys for the kids and sometimes just a hug.

Among them were Israeli Jews and Arabs from the One Middle East Agency in their black tops and yellow vests, Hungarian Lutheran aid workers in green bibs, UNHCR aid workers in blue bibs and another local Hungarian charity in red.

The Hungarian Red Cross offered medical care and World Central Kitchen had set up a food marquee. Some volunteers were independent and unattached to aid agencies, with Ukrainian speakers especially in demand.

They included Marina Doron, 35, a mother of two from Israel who was born in Ukraine and had flown in a week ago. I watched Marina push a baby in a pram and at the same time support the baby's mother who was trying to calm her screaming 2-year-old daughter.

The Independent has set up a petition calling on the UK government to be at the forefront of the international community offering aid and support to those in Ukraine. To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees/u/30286981) .

We want to get 250,000 signatures as soon as we can to help put as much pressure on the government as possible, please add your support today.

Marina said: "Yesterday a 20-year-old girl came with her sisters aged 14 and 4, so overnight she became a mum to two refugees. It was her first time abroad and she was scared - she had no plan and no idea where to go. I was able to assist with next steps, how to get to Budapest and what help to expect. Sometimes mothers just need help from another mother."

Another volunteer, Anmol Gupta, 29, from India, had been studying to be a surgeon in Kharkiv and now offered his services as a translator. He had fled Ukraine 18 days ago on a motorbike, dodging incoming fire, but had to abandon it after a Russian bullet went straight through the petrol tank (he showed me the photo), missing him by inches.

He ended up on a 27-hour train to the Hungarian border and decided to stay on in Zhony to help "because people are freaked out".

"I have a room 500m from here which I use to shower but I sleep here in the blue tent because trains can come at any time and they need interpreters," he said. Standing to one side were two Brits from Weston-super-Mare, handing out teddy bears and bringing smiles to children's faces.

David Fricker, 39, a train driver, and Neil Sansam, 42, an engineer, had managed to secure a free 52-seater coach which they packed with 7,000 donated teddies and drove to Hungary, taking three days. "We have been here a week and handed out over 1,500 teddies," said David.

"With all the volunteers, there is a lot of kindness here. We are trying to bring a little joy for children who have been through a nightmare and to make them feel this is a nice place to be."

As the Russian invasion entered its second month and with the number of Ukrainians fleeing to the west topping 3.6 million, over 325,000 people have passed directly into Hungary. They come via five border crossings, of which Zhony is the busiest.

Built in 1964, it features a Soviet-era statue of a woman releasing a dove of peace. Nobody notices its chipped façade, nor the irony.

There are meant to be eight trains a day here, one every three hours, but only around five actually come, and almost never on time. Yesterday evening the last train was seven hours late, arriving at 1.15am and carrying on it the entire youth team from Shakhtar Donetsk FC in eastern Ukraine.

In the first two weeks of the invasion, more than 3,000 refugees disembarked here every day. Numbers are now down to a few hundred, and most take the first train available to Budapest before fanning out across Europe.

For those who want to shower and rest before moving on, the local high school has been transformed into a shelter with classrooms hosting up to 300 refugees on camp beds, though only 40 beds were occupied. One classroom had been turned into an emergency medical clinic by the Hungarian Red Cross, who call it the H-HERO centre.

Andras Molnar, 34, the team leader, is in charge of a team of 12 who operate between the train station and the high school, sleeping in the school. He said: "Currently around 20 refugees a day ask for medical assistance. Most are people with pre-existing chronic diseases who don't have their medication with them, such as for high blood pressure or respiratory conditions, and also mothers and children whose immune system is low because they are depleted and exhausted."

Meanwhile, the World Central Kitchen tent in front of the concourse filled to the brim as another 80 refugees arrived on the 2pm train and piled in alongside arrivals from the earlier midday train.

Among them I found Ekataryn, whose family did not have biometric passports but had been given 60-day temporary visas by the police, hungrily devouring a cup of hot soup.

Surrounded by her worldly possessions - reduced to a single suitcase, a satchel and a plastic bag - she said: "I can't be calm because my husband can't leave and the rest of my family, including my mum, are still in Mariupol and I have no way of contacting them and knowing if they are alive or dead. A lot of people can't leave. You have to find someone who will risk taking you out, who has a car and petrol because most of the cars are destroyed and there is no gas and even if you find all these things, it's risky because they are bombing all the time."

At the next table, 28-year-old mother Maria Tkachuk fed her 19-month-old son Vsevolod in a high chair. "We ran away from Kyiv on the first day of the war," she said.

"We were living in a village 150km from Kyiv but yesterday we left at 7am and got here after 31 hours travelling. We were trying to find the courage to leave for a while because it's hard to travel with a baby. My parents and husband had to stay behind, so it is terrible, but I came to save my son and we will go to friends in Spain."

I spoke to Vita, 23, and Olya, 27, who had journeyed from Kherson, an embattled city in the south. "My mother refuses to leave because they took my brother who is 25 to the war," said Olya, as Vita wept with her head in her hands. Olya's brother is Vita's fiancée. "We have booked a hotel in Germany for three days. We will have to figure it out from there."

Soon the train came for Budapest and the concourse emptied. The arrivals board said the 5pm train from Chop in Ukraine was running 70 minutes late. I watched as six-year-old Nazar Ulan scooted around the near-vacant arrivals hall on a red plastic tractor while his mother, Nadia, tried to keep an eye on him, look after her other son, Vlad, 3, and call ahead to her sister in western Europe.

Nadia, who had travelled from Rivne near the Belarusian border, said: "This is my first time abroad and I am so scared. The Belarusian army are 200km from our home, ready to attack, so we come. It's terrifying when people want to kill you and your family. Nazar didn't want to leave without his father and said we can stay four days, no more. I don't know how to tell him not to cry because I was crying too. But now I am telling myself I must not collapse because who will look after my children?"

Ninety minutes later, as Marina and the rest of the aid workers readied themselves, the next train rumbled in from Ukraine. As the new refugees crossed the tracks, hands reached out to hands. Inside the concourse, I checked in on Nadia but she and her boys had gone. Another child commandeered the plastic tractor. Another mother looked on.

Additional reporting and translating by Georgina Ruszinko

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine: Three in four back giving refuge to those fleeing war as ministers 'misread public mood' on asylum system*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650C-9HX1-JBNF-W00N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 13, 2022 Sunday 9:43 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 975 words

**Byline:** Lizzie Dearden

**Highlight:** Refugees Welcome: Experts say ministers have 'misread public mood' as survey shows support growing for refugees before Ukraine invasion

**Body**

Three in four Britons back giving refuge to those fleeing war or persecution, new polling shows, as criticism of the government's response to the [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) crisis continues.

An Ipsos survey found that even before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a majority of Brits thought people should be able to seek refuge in the UK and the majority had sympathy for [*asylum seekers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/asylum-seekers-0) crossing the Channel.

The results come as The Independent's [*Refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) Welcome appeal was set to pass 200,000 signatures. [*The petition*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees/u/30286981) was created to add pressure on the UK Government to act and provide a safe haven for refugees to ensure we take in Ukrainians who want to find safety. [*You can add your support here.*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees/u/30286981)

On Sunday charities and opposition parties voiced fears that the [*government's new sponsorship route*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-refugees-social-media-michael-gove-b2034885.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine:%20Sponsor%20route%20'falls%20short',%20say%20charities%20as%20Britons%20asked%20to%20'match'%20with%20refugees%20on%20social%20media) - which will give Britons who provide homes to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** £350 per month - would be "slow and cumbersome".

Cabinet minister Michael Gove said he hoped "tens of thousands" would be able to come via the route, and announced that local authority areas will be entitled to more than £10,000 per Ukrainian refugee in their area.

But there were questions over whether those arriving through the scheme would be given refugee status, or access to certain benefits and support, and the safeguards in place over who can sponsor people and how Ukrainians are selected.

The government previously created a bespoke "family scheme" that offers three-year visas but does not amount to a grant of asylum.

Experts said the government had "misread the public mood", as the war sparks wider questions over the UK's asylum system.

A wide-ranging survey by Ipsos and the British Future think tank, which was carried out weeks before Russian forces invaded Ukraine, showed that attitudes towards immigration and asylum have warmed significantly since the 2016 EU referendum.

Only 16 per cent of Brits disagreed that people "should be able to take refuge in other countries, including in Britain, to escape from war or persecution".

Less than a third of people agreed with the statement that "it is important to have an asylum system that deters people from seeking asylum in the UK" while 46 per cent would rather have a fair asylum system "even if that means allowing more asylum seekers to stay and live in the UK than we do now".

When asked about small boat crossings in the English Channel, 56 per cent of those surveyed said they had sympathy for people making the journeys, while 39 per cent said they had little or no sympathy.

Mr Gove said he expects the first ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** making use of the government's new sponsorship route to come to the UK "in a week's time".

The levelling up minister said he hoped individuals and community groups would use social media to connect with refugees, adding that charities would help in the "matching" process.

Labour cautioned that "too many questions remain unanswered" about the new scheme. "We're asking people to take to social media at a time they're fleeing a war zone. This is a serious crisis - it's not an online dating situation," shadow levelling up minister Lisa Nandy told LBC.

The Independent is raising money for the people of Ukraine - if you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

Sunder Katwala, the director of British Future, said: "The government clearly misread the public mood about ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and is now playing catch-up to make the generous offer of sanctuary that people feel is right ... underlying attitudes to immigration are becoming more positive over time."

The survey showed that the number of British people wanting general immigration reduced was at its lowest level for seven years, while a greater proportion of people said it has had a positive effect on Britain.

The research involved interviewing 3,206 British adults online between 28 January and 10 February 2022, with findings weighted to reflect the population profile.

Gideon Skinner, the research director at Ipsos, said: "We know that Britons are supportive of making it easier for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to come to the UK, but this research shows this is part of a long-term belief in the principle of giving refuge to people fleeing war and persecution.

The next stage of the research, which will be published in six months' time, will show what impact the Ukraine war has had on attitudes.

Polling also showed that less than a third of British people want to deter asylum seekers, as controversial new laws are to be debated in parliament.

A bill being considered by the House of Lords on Monday seeks to criminalise all refugees arriving in Britain "without permission" and see them deported abroad, or possibly held in offshore processing centres.

The Nationality and Borders Bill has been hailed by the government as the "cornerstone" of its immigration plans, and names one of its key priorities as "deterring illegal entry into the UK".

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered.

To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 13, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine independence day marked in Belfast*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6679-PKH1-JBNF-W3B7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 24, 2022 Wednesday 4:42 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 396 words

**Byline:** Rebecca Black

**Highlight:** There was traditional music and culture on display in the Northern Ireland capital for the date which also marked the six-month anniversary of the war

**Body**

Ukrainians living in [*Northern Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/northern-ireland) have gathered at [*Belfast*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/belfast) City Hall to mark their country’s independence day.

The date was celebrated with music, men and women dressed in traditional clothing as well as a display of Ukrainian arts and crafts.

Northern Ireland Office minister [*Conor Burns*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/conor-burns) joined the crowds, and was warmly received as he spoke with people, even donning a flower garland hat at one stage.

The gathering was made more poignant coming on the six-month anniversary of the invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) by Russian president Vladimir Putin’s regime.

Marina Furey, who is originally from Znamjanka but has been living in [*Lisburn*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lisburn) , Co Antrim for 18 years, said they wanted to show support to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the region as well as show their culture to local people.

“Today we celebrate independence day, it’s been 31 years since we got our independence and it is also six months exactly since the Russian invasion of Ukraine so we want to show our support to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have come to Northern Ireland,” she told the PA news agency.

“We had a stall to give out information for those who have come to Northern Ireland recently, but also we want to show local people a little bit of our culture, with our music and to support Ukraine outside Ukraine.”

Ms Furey still has family in Ukraine, and said it is sad and stressful for her as the war goes on.

“It still feels unreal that is it happening, that it is still going on, heartbreaking,” she said.

“I’m proud to be Ukrainian but it’s not the same as being back home to celebrate independence day.

“I have spoken to some refugees who have come to Northern Ireland, some of them are finding it hard to get used to be a different language and being so far from home.

“That’s why we are here to give help and support to those who need it.”

Efforts are still ongoing to collect aid to send to Ukraine.

“We are collecting humanitarian aid across Northern Ireland, there are collection points, including one in Lisburn where I live,” she said.

“We are collecting essentials, such as women’s and children’s essentials, we have a place in Mallusk where we separate donations into boxes.

“Last Tuesday we sent 18 tons of aid of humanitarian aid which reached Ukraine today, and will be delivered to where it is needed.

“People have lost their homes, they need clothes, and all the essentials, especially for babies, food and blankets.”

**Load-Date:** August 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*All MSPs should call on UK Government to waive Ukrainian visa rules - Robertson*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WS-W301-DY4H-K3X2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 1, 2022 Tuesday 4:38 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 344 words

**Byline:** Craig Paton

**Highlight:** The Constitution Secretary said ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** 'have every right to be here'.

**Body**

[*MSPs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/msps) from all parties should call on the [*UK Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk-government) to waive visa requirements for Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion, Scotland's Constitution Secretary has said.

On Monday, Home Secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) refused to scrap rules that would allow people to come to the UK without the need for paperwork, saying it could have an impact on security.

She went on to say that the scheme put in place, which would allow Ukrainians with immediate family members in the UK to come could help up to 100,000 people, but a shift on Tuesday would allow for parents, children over 18 and siblings to also be allowed to come.

The Prime Minister announced the shift during a visit to Poland, adding that companies and citizens will also be able to sponsor ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

But in Holyrood, Constitution Secretary [*Angus Robertson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/angus-robertson) called on MSPs from across the political spectrum to pressure the Government into going further.

Responding to a question from Lib Dem leader Alex Cole-Hamilton, in which he asked for funding to be given to local authorities to house any refugees coming from Ukraine along with making it easier for [*Scots*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scots) to house people fleeing the invasion in their own homes.

"Yes, we need to be speaking with local authority partners, but I stress to him, at the present time, Ukrainians able to get here will be classed as people who have family members who they are expected to be staying with," Mr Robertson said.

"What he's talking about and what I'm concerned about and what the Scottish Government is concerned about is all those people who do not have contacts here, who do not have family members here.

"They, frankly, have every right to be here just as every refugee does."

He added: "We need to unify our voices, it's been appealed for across the chamber.

"I would appeal for all colleagues, please, let's be united in saying: waive these restrictions to be able to come to the United Kingdom.

"Most people will want to stay close to Ukraine in central Europe but for those who wish to come to the United Kingdom we should welcome them with open arms."

**Load-Date:** March 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Mila Kunis and Ashton Kutcher pledge to match Ukraine donations up to £2.25m*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XB-NPM1-JBNF-W2KJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 4, 2022 Friday 3:53 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 366 words

**Byline:** Mike Bedigan

**Highlight:** The actors are the latest Hollywood power couple to pitch in with generous financial support to those caught up in the 'devastating' conflict.

**Body**

[*Mila Kunis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mila-kunis) and [*Ashton Kutcher*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ashton-kutcher) say they will match donations of up to 3,000,000 USD (£2,250,000) to help supply humanitarian aide to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

The actors are the latest [*Hollywood*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hollywood) power couple to pitch in with generous financial support to those caught up in the "devastating" conflict.

In a video appeal Kunis, who was born in Chernivtsi, [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , said there was "no place in this world for this kind of unjust attack on humanity".

"I have always considered myself an [*American*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/american) , a proud American. I love everything this country has done for myself and my family," she said.

View this post on Instagram [*A post shared by Ashton Kutcher (@aplusk)*](https://www.instagram.com/tv/CaqQZ-clv8u/?utm_source=ig_embed&utm_campaign=loading) "But today I have never been more proud to be a Ukrainian."The events that have unfolded in Ukraine are devastating. There is no place in this world for this kind of unjust attack on humanity."Kutcher said: "While we witness the bravery of the people in the country she was born in, we're also witness to the needs of those who have chosen safety."The Two And A Half Men star added that "logistics" was the principal challenge, getting housing and supplies into the area.The couple said they would match donations made to rental company AirBnB and freight transporter Flexport for up to 3,000,000 dollars (£2,250,000), with the aim of raising 30,000,000 dollars (£22,500,000) View this post on Instagram[*A post shared by Ryan Reynolds (@vancityreynolds)*](https://www.instagram.com/p/Cac3CUYpR9O/?utm_source=ig_embed&utm_campaign=loading)

Kunis added: "The people of Ukraine are strong and brave but being strong and brave doesn't mean you're not worthy of support.

"We need to support the people of Ukraine."

The page had raised over 2,500,000 dollars just three hours after going live, following a large offline donation attributed to the Ron Conway Family.

Fellow celebrity couple Ryan Reynolds and Blake Lively also previously pledged to match donations up to 1,000,000 dollars (£750,000) to support the growing number of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

The pair urged people to donate to humanitarian charity US For UNHCR to help the thousands of citizens displaced by the conflict, and said they would double the support shown.

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Kyiv ambassador urges more Britons to host refugees on Homes for Ukraine scheme anniversary*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67VP-5CB1-DY4H-K0TY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 25, 2023 Saturday 8:10 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 954 words

**Byline:** Andy Gregory

**Highlight:** Charities warn they are ‘constantly fire-fighting’ elements of scheme ‘riddled with flaws’ in its first 12 months

**Body**

Kyiv’s ambassador has urged more people in the UK to host [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) fleeing Russia’s invasion, on the one-year anniversary of the Homes for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) scheme.

Thanking Britons for standing “shoulder to shoulder” with Ukraine, ambassador Vadym Prystaiko said in a video message that 160,000 Ukrainian women and children had now arrived under the scheme since Vladimir Putin’s invasion last February – but warned that “some still need your help”.

Refugee charities told The Independent that Homes for Ukraine had been “riddled with flaws” in its first year, while councils cautioned that “significant challenges remain” to ensure ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** “can be supported in the long-term”.

[*The Independent reported*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukrainian-refugees-homes-for-ukraine-councils-b2239834.html?ref=pmp-magazine) in January that some Ukrainians were being forced to choose between homelessness in the UK and returning to their war-torn homeland, with official figures showing some 4,630 Ukrainian households were classified as homeless in England in the 12 months to February.

While councils are legally obliged to house Ukrainians if they do not have anywhere to live, charity RefuAid had warned of a “varied level of support from councils”, alleging that some councils had told refugees they could not help or receive a referral until 48 hours before they were made homeless.

In December, the government announced £150m in funding for councils to support Ukrainians into their own homes, and increased “thank you” payments for sponsors to £500 per month. The £10,500 per refugee received by councils in 2022 was largely reduced, however, to £5,900 in 2023.

More than £10m has already been given to councils, with an expected £122.5m of further payments expected by the end of March, providing up to 4,000 homes by 2024, the [*Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/department-for-levelling-up-housing-and-communities) said on Saturday.

But despite the number of Ukrainians presenting as homeless soaring 44 per cent in the last month, details on the new funding “remain thin and councils need urgent clarity on how and when it can be spent”, the [*Local Government Association*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/local-government-association) has warned.

“As the war continues into its second year, significant challenges remain to ensure they can be supported in the long-term,” said James Jamieson, chair of the body representing 350 councils in England and Wales.

Councils are “hugely concerned that there is no funding beyond the first year for councils and that funding for arrivals in 2023 has halved,” said Mr Jamieson, adding: “This funding is crucial in supporting councils to offer wraparound help and turning a roof over someone’s head into a life with health security, job prospects and community support.”

Welcoming the increase in payments to those hosting refugees, Mr Jamieson said it was “imperative” that these continued to be increased in light of inflation and energy costs “to ensure matches do not become unsustainable for the hosts”.

Describing the scheme as having been “riddled with flaws”, RefuAid’s chief operating officer Kate Higgins warned of “huge safeguarding concerns” in the matching process and criticised the “significantly lacking” post-arrival support which has left refugees facing homelessness and destitution “in precarious, unsafe and potentially exploitative situations”.

Despite the government trumpeting figures on Saturday suggesting 28,450 Ukrainians were in employment within around six months of arriving in the UK, and £11.5m in funding to help refugees learn English and find jobs, Ms Higgins lamented the “minimal support” for Ukrainians to do so.

“This inevitably results in people becoming reliant on Universal Credit and unable to move on from sponsorship or council accommodation, despite a huge wealth of incredibly valuable skills, qualifications and experiences,” she said.

Rebecca Russell, who leads York City of Sanctuary’s team supporting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, hailed the “amazing” grassroots response as “fundamental to the scheme’s success”.

“However, where it has fallen down is there were few long-term solutions or strategies for issues around finding work and housing,” she said, adding: “We are constantly fire-fighting these two points.”

While the scheme “generally functioned well” for six to 12 months at the host level, it is “the ‘what comes after’ when people need to leave the sponsorship scheme” which is experiencing problems, Ms Russell suggested.

Ministers should “at least” acknowledge that ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are now being forced to “compete” with local residents on the “extremely tough” private rental market amid high prices and demand, Ms Russell said, suggesting that local authorities could be asked to step up as rent guarantors.

With some Ukrainians finding work “very quickly” and others “still struggling to get on their feet”, Ms Russell believes “it will take at least another year to settle the first wave of people” – as she echoed the ambassador’s call on Saturday for more sponsors to come forward.

“We recently did a new call out, and numbers were understandably a lot less [than at the invasion’s outset]. But the demand from people asking to come here, and the need for sponsor re-matches, has not dwindled in comparison,” Ms Russell said.

Levelling up secretary [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) said: “One year on from the first person arriving in the UK under our Homes For Ukraine Scheme I remain incredibly proud of this country’s response, with the British public having shown their true generosity of spirit and their enduring belief in freedom.

“Ukrainians have embraced every aspect of their new lives in the UK – sending their children to local schools, entering the jobs market and working on their English language skills. This is proof not only of the immense bravery and resilience of the Ukrainian people but the huge value they are bringing to our communities.”

**Load-Date:** March 25, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian Peewees advance with 2-0 win over Romania*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67JB-60B1-JBNF-W07X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 14, 2023 Tuesday 12:55 AM GMT

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**Length:** 532 words

**Byline:** John Wawrow

**Highlight:** The boys’ hockey team of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** extended its celebrated stay in Canada for a few more days, at least

**Body**

The boys’ hockey team of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** extended its celebrated stay in [*Canada*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/canada) for a few more days, at least.

Maksym Kukharenko scored a power-play goal and Matvii Kulish earned the shutout in the Ukrainian Selects 2-0 victory over Team [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) Wolves in an elimination game at the International Peewee Tournament in [*Quebec City*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/quebec-city) on Monday night.

The Ukrainians, who have been celebrated around town since their arrival some two weeks ago, are three wins from clinching a spot in the tournament Class AA championship on Sunday. They advanced to play the Vermont Flames Academy on Friday.

Appearing more accustomed to playing in front of large crowds after a slow start in winning their opening game two days earlier, Kukharenko scored 4:37 into the 10-minute first period off a shot from the left point that appeared to deflect in off a Romanian defender. The tournament doesn't keep track of shots, Kulish's save total is unknown. His best came a minute into the second period, when he turned aside a shot from Alexandru-Andrei Dan at the left post.

Ivan Bilozerov capped the scoring by converting a rebound with 61 seconds remaining.

The game was played in front of a much smaller crowd than the estimated near-capacity 18,000 blue-and-white flag waving fans who turned out for the Ukrainian’s 3-1 tournament-opening win over the Boston Junior Bruins on Saturday. The lower bowl was only half full, but mostly made up of Ukrainian fans.

A smaller contingent of Romanian fans were gathered in one section, and made their presence known with chants, songs and the banging of cowbells.

Tournament officials don’t release attendance figures, but the crowd on Monday was still far larger than the 20 or so people Selects forward Zahar Kovalenko said he was used to playing in front of in Ukraine. The nerves showed on Saturday, with Ukraine overcoming a 1-0 deficit by scoring three times in the final five minutes.

The Ukrainian’s presence has placed a larger global spotlight on the 63-year-old tournament with the war in Ukraine showing signs of once again escalating, a little under a year since Russia’s invasion began.

The Selects are regarded as symbol of peace for Ukraine and hope for a better future, and they’ve merited mention from Canadian Prime Minister [*Justin Trudeau*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/justin-trudeau).

The team was cobbled together from a group of 11 and 12-year-old refugees, some of whom still live in Ukraine and others whose families have been scattered across Europe. At least five have fathers on the front lines defending Ukraine, while another player’s father died in battle.

The matchup of teams from bordering nations featured several coincidences. Romania is where the Ukrainians held training camp before arriving in Quebec City some two weeks ago. Romania was chosen because that’s where coach Evgheniy Pysarenko now lives, and began holding camps for players after watching many youth fleeing Ukraine with hockey equipment in tow.

And the Romanian team’s presence in the tournament stems from Pysarenko, who recommended to the nation’s hockey officials to seek sending a team to the Quebec City tournament four years ago.

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[*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) sports: [*https://apnews.com/hub/apf-sports*](https://apnews.com/hub/apf-sports) and [*https://twitter.com/AP\_Sports*](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

**Load-Date:** February 13, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Protesters on oligarch's balcony have 'made peace with getting arrested'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650J-G551-JBNF-W0J7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 4:02 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 650 words

**Byline:** Rebecca Speare-Cole

**Highlight:** The squatters broke into the property in Belgrave Square at around 1am on Monday and declared that it 'belongs to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***'.

**Body**

Four protesters who have been surrounded by police on the balcony of a central [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london) mansion owned by oligarch [*Oleg Deripaska*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/oleg-deripaska) say they have "made their peace with getting arrested".

The squatters broke into the property in Belgrave Square at around 1am on Monday and declared that it "belongs to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***".

Mr Deripaska, an industrialist who has had close links with the [*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) political establishment, was targeted with sanctions by the Government last week.

The four men, who initially told reporters there were five of them, have been sitting on the edge of the balcony, surrounded by police both inside and outside the building, for more than an hour.

The street has also been cordoned off with at least 10 police vehicles and dozens of officers on the scene.

Officers wearing harnesses first tried to deploy a ladder to access the balcony but after the squatters sat in the way to obstruct them, a JCB crane was moved in to lift them up instead.

[*Police*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/police) wearing riot gear also used a drill to break open the front door and enter the house.

Scotland Yard said in a statement: "Officers have completed a search of the property in Belgrave Square and are satisfied there are no protesters inside.

"We continue to engage with those on the balcony as we balance the need for enforcement with the safety of all involved."

Speaking to the PA news agency over the phone, one of the protesters, who refused to give his name but said he was from Lithuania, said: "All our group made peace with arrest because this was always one of the options.

"I'm ready to take the consequences for something I believe."

We stay here until Putin stops the war

Protester

He also said they had done "everything by the book" and they had left "no criminal damage" in the property.

The man said that although he did not know what reason the police would have to arrest or charge him he "would like to go to court and prove my point".

"This house could house 200 people. We have been doing a job the Government should do. We have liberated the property for refugees," he added.

Describing the house, he said: "It is massive. I got lost I don't know how many times.

"There are so many unnecessary rooms, there is a cinema, lots of expensive paintings. No one deserves all this."

Asked how they got into the property, he joked: "Squatters' magic with some climbing skills."

The squatters call themselves the London Mahknovists - after Nestor Makhno, who led an anarchist force that attempted to form a stateless society in Ukraine during the Russian Revolution of 1917-1923.

They hung a Ukrainian flag as well as two signs which read "this property has been liberated" and "Putin go f\*\*\* yourself".

They also danced, played music and one man sang lines from the Dirty Dancing song (I've Had) The Time Of My Life.

"We stay here until Putin stops the war," one man said to reporters.

He continued: "We have opened the building to house ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and refugees from all nations."

They said the [*UK Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk-government) had "failed" to properly respond to the invasion. The group also criticised the police, comparing them to those arresting protesters in Russia.

A Metropolitan Police statement earlier said: "Police were called shortly after 1am on Monday March 14 to a residential property in Belgrave Square, SW1.

"Officers attended and found that a number of people had gained entry and hung banners from upstairs windows."Officers remain at the location."

Mr Deripaska has been described as "a prominent Russian businessman and pro-Kremlin oligarch", who is "closely associated" with both the Russian government and President Vladimir Putin.

His wealth is estimated to be £2.3 billion and he has a multimillion-pound property portfolio in the UK which, according to a 2007 High Court judgment, includes the house at 5 Belgrave Square. Records indicate it has not changed hands since and is owned by an offshore British Virgin Islands company.

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Home news in brief*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67SY-P7C1-F072-44GY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 17, 2023 Friday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 17

**Length:** 913 words

**Body**

Fire engulfs 400-year-old hotel housing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***

A 400-year-old hotel in West Sussex that was housing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** has been engulfed by a fire. The blaze was first reported at 1.08am early yesterday, with 10 fire engines, an aerial ladder platform, water carrier and off-road vehicle initially working on the scene in Midhurst. Originating in the hotel's roof space, a "significant" fire had spread to the adjoining properties, West Sussex Fire and Rescue service said.

More than 30 people were safely evacuated, with a relief centre set up for those displaced. As the flames worsened, assistance was later provided by Surrey Fire and Rescue Service, Hampshire and Isle of White Fire and Rescue Service, Sussex Police and South East Coast Ambulance Service, amounting to 15 fire engines. The local community is rallying together to provide emergency aid for the ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who were evacuated from the hotel. Having dipped into its existing fundraising pot to help, local charity Petworth Ukraine Relief has been raising money since the war began, gathering aid locally and shipping the contents from West Sussex to Ukraine.

Andrew Ashton-Smith, a sales engineer from the nearby town of Petworth, volunteers with the charity. He described the fire as "harrowing" but said the local community is doing everything it can to help those in need. "I feel shocked but more keen to try and make sure that we can do all we can to help the Ukrainian families here as some of them have children," he said, noting that his daughter goes to school with some of the Ukrainian children affected by the blaze.

The cause of the fire remains under investigation by fire investigation officers, supported by Sussex Police.

Man 'tried to kill woman in car park as he thought she was a spy'

A man tried to stab a woman to death in a leisure centre car park because he believed she was a spy working for GCHQ, a court has heard. Joshua Bowles, 29, has been charged with attempted murder over the incident in Cheltenham on 9 March. He was not asked to enter a plea during a brief appearance at Westminster Magistrates' Court yesterday.

The court heard that Mr Bowles researched his victim and her whereabouts "believing her to work for GCHQ", Britain's signals intelligence and cybersecurity agency. He allegedly attacked her as she left the leisure centre, punching and stabbing her several times. She required emergency surgery and remains in hospital.

Prosecutor Kathryn Selby said Mr Bowles "holds views on the work" he believes GCHQ to conduct, and that in his mind his victim "represents the state". Mr Bowles is also charged with actual bodily harm after allegedly punching a man who tried to intervene. The defendant, of the Up Hatherley suburb of Cheltenham, was remanded in custody ahead of a hearing at the Old Bailey on 31 March.

Murder probe after man stabbed to death near Tube station

A man was stabbed to death in a fight outside a home in northwest London. Police were called to the residential street Chester Drive, Harrow, shortly after 2am early yesterday. Officers responded with London Ambulance Service, whose medics treated the victim in his late fifties. However, despite their efforts, paramedics pronounced him dead at the scene, a short walk from North Harrow Tube station.

Another man, in his thirties, was arrested at the scene on suspicion of murder and has been taken into police custody. A Metropolitan Police spokesperson said: "A crime scene is in place and enquiries are ongoing, led by the Specialist Crime Command." Detectives said the man's family had been informed.

MPs will vote on Sunak's Brexit deal within days

A key part of Rishi Sunak's new post-Brexit deal for Northern Ireland will be voted on by MPs in parliament next week. They will be asked to approve a statutory instrument relating to the "Stormont brake" section of the deal on Wednesday, Commons leader Penny Mordaunt announced. It represents the first Commons test for the PM's Windsor Framework deal with the EU.

But No 10 said more votes would be held on different aspects of the deal - raising the prospect of a return to showdown Brexit battles seen under Theresa May and Boris Johnson. Asked if other statutory instruments would be voted on, Mr Sunak's spokesperson said: "I believe they will be. I think there are a series that will be agreed through the House."

Former Labour prime minister Tony Blair told MPs that the Sunak deal was "the most practical way forward" and "the best I think you can do with this".

Woman jailed for manslaughter after filming stepson's death

A woman who filmed her three-year-old stepson as he lay dying from a brain injury has been jailed for manslaughter. Leila Borrington, 23, killed Harvey Borrington by slapping him "multiple times" around the head, following two earlier attacks in the four months before, which left him with a broken arm and marks on his face.

Nottingham Crown Court was told Borrington lied about what had happened to Harvey, who had severe non-verbal autism, when paramedics arrived at her home in Main Road, Jacksdale, near Kirkby-in-Ashfield, in August 2021. She also delayed calling emergency services after inflicting "unsurvivable" injuries, including a skull fracture - instead sending a text message to the boy's father reading: "Why does this happen to me?"

Sentencing Borrington to 15 years in prison on Wednesday, High Court judge Mr Justice Nicklin said the unlawful killing had had a profound effect on his loved ones.

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Amid Ukraine war, pope to give vision for Europe in Hungary*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:683Y-1731-JBNF-W0GW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 28, 2023 Friday 6:53 AM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 974 words

**Byline:** Nicole Winfield and Justin Spike

**Highlight:** Pope Francis will be outlining his vision for the future of Europe during a three-day visit to Hungary

**Body**

Pope Francis plans to outline his vision for the future of [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) during a three-day visit to [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) starting Friday, with Russia’s war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , migration flows and Hungary’s tense relations with Brussels looming large over the pontiff’s weekend journey.

Hungarian officials say Francis’ pilgrimage was designed primarily to let the pope minister to the country’s Catholic community and to encourage its members in their faith. But with the war unfolding next door and Hungary butting heads with other European Union nations over rule of law issues and LGBTQ+ rights, Francis’ words and deeds in the heart of Europe will carry strong political undertones.

After his arrival, Francis is scheduled to meet with President Katalin Novak and Prime Minister Viktor Orban, and then to deliver his main political speech to Hungarian authorities and diplomats. He has a chance to speak to Hungarian society and Europe at large in his final event Sunday, when he’ll address academic and cultural figures at Budapest’s Catholic University.

In between, Francis is set to meet with some of the 35,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have remained in Hungary after 2.5 million fled across Ukraine's border with Hungary's early on in Russia’s invasion. It will be another opportunity for Francis to raise immigration as a topic and and to reiterate his belief that European countries should, within their means, open their arms and borders to people fleeing poverty as well as conflicts.

Orban’s hard line on migration is well known. In 2015-2016, Hungary built a razor wire fence on its border with Serbia to stop people from entering. However, Francis has expressed appreciation for Hungary’s recent welcome of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said Francis would use his time in the heart of Europe to look to the continent's future.

“It’s difficult to not think about the European Union and all of Europe,” Bruni said of the trip. He noted that the “passion” for Europe had perhaps faded over the years and that Francis aimed to revive “the Europe of peoples, with its own history and responsibility in the commitment to global peace.”

For the 86-year-old pontiff, the visit will once again test his frail health after he spent four days in the hospital last month with bronchitis. While Hungarian officials had hoped Francis would travel around the country, the Vatican opted to keep him in [*Budapest*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/budapest) , where he spent seven hours in 2021 to close out a church congress.

The visit comes as the European Union's parliament continues to put pressure on Hungary to counter what EU lawmakers consider a deterioration in the rule of law and democratic principles under Orban's government, including rolling back the rights of LGBTQ+ people.

The four biggest groups in the European Parliament have called on the EU's executive commission to withhold pandemic recovery funds for Hungary until liberal democracy principles are met.

The European Commission has accused Orban for years of dismantling democratic institutions, taking control of the media and infringing on minority rights, allegations the prime minister has denied.

Hungary’s Constitution, approved unilaterally by Orban’s right-wing populist Fidesz party in 2011, outlaws same-sex marriage, and the government has prohibited same-sex couples from adopting children. The government has also outlawed the depiction of homosexuality or divergent gender identities to minors in media content.

Catholic doctrine also prohibits same-sex marriages, but Francis has backed legal protections for people in same-sex unions. He has long ministered to gay and transgender Catholics, while blasting “gender ideology” as an alleged form of the West's ideological colonization of the developing world.

Francis is unlikely to wade directly into Hungary's democracy and LGBTQ+ rights debate and instead speak in general terms about the lofty, democratic goals that decades ago inspired the forming of what would become the European Union.

Hungary’s ambassador to the Holy See, Eduard Habsburg, said he thinks Hungary is actually upholding Europe’s founding ideals better than many of its EU partners.

“Hungary has stayed true to the values that have always been the values of the European Union, which is family, faith, Christian, Judeo-Christian roots, sovereignty and all these things,” Habsburg said. “And you sometimes have the idea that … some of these have been lost in the western parts of Europe.”

With Francis traveling closer to Ukraine than at any time since Russia invaded Ukraine, the war will also be front and center during his visit. He plans to visit a Greek Catholic church that delivered aid to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Francis, who met with Ukraine’s prime minister on the eve of the trip at the Vatican, is likely to repeat his call for a peaceful resolution of the war and to express solidarity with the Ukrainian people.

Orban has called for a cease-fire but been lukewarm in his support of Ukraine, refusing to supply Kyiv with weapons and threatening to veto EU sanctions against Moscow while maintaining Hungary’s strong dependence on Russian energy.

While there was speculation that Francis might meet with Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill while in Budapest, no such meeting is planned, according to the Rev. Csaba Torok, the parochial administrator for the Cathedral of Esztergom and coordinator of Catholic programming on state media.

Francis held an unprecedented meeting with Kirill in 2016 and had hoped to pursue a second encounter, but Kirill’s support for Russia’s invasion put the plans on indefinite hold. \_\_\_

Associated Press religion coverage receives support through the AP’s collaboration with The Conversation US, with funding from Lilly Endowment Inc. The [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) is solely responsible for this content.

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Follow AP's coverage of the war in Ukraine: [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** April 28, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Homes for Ukraine ‘thank you’ payments to be raised after one year of hosting*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6736-8B61-DY4H-K4FS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

December 14, 2022 Wednesday 3:04 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 824 words

**Byline:** Jemma Crew

**Highlight:** Councils will also receive money to help prevent homelessness among arrivals and to acquire more homes for people fleeing conflicts.

**Body**

[*Families*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/families) who host ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** for more than a year are to receive increased payments in recognition of their ongoing support during the cost-of-living crisis, the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) has said.

Hosts under the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) scheme will get £500 a month after their first 12 months of sponsorship, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) said.

Councils will also be given money to help prevent homelessness among arrivals and to acquire more homes for people fleeing conflict in places such as Ukraine and Afghanistan.

But the sum local authorities receive for each Ukrainian refugee who arrives into their area under the scheme will be reduced “in light of wider pressures on the public finances”, DLUHC said.

Some 107,100 Ukrainians have arrived in the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, with 144,600 visas issued, latest Government figures show.

We have stood firm with Ukraine but we owe special thanks to the tens of thousands of families across the UK who opened their homes and their hearts to Ukrainians fleeing war. In recognition of their ongoing support, I’m pleased to confirm that they will see their ‘thank you’ payments uplifted for their second year of sponsorship

Michael Gove

DLUHC said the monthly thank you payments to hosts will be extended from 12 months to two years.

The increase – from £350 a month for the first year to £500 a month thereafter – is less than former refugees minister Lord [*Richard Harrington*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/richard-harrington) had been calling for.

Before stepping down in September, he said he had been lobbying for the payment to be doubled to £700 after six months.

In cases where sponsorship arrangements cannot continue, councils across the UK will be given £150 million to help Ukrainians move into their own homes and reduce the risk of homelessness.

It can also be used to prevent homelessness among other groups.

A separate £500 million Local Authority Housing Fund will enable councils in England to acquire housing stock for those fleeing conflicts, such as those in Ukraine and Afghanistan.

This is expected to provide up to 4,000 homes by 2024, DLUHC said, through buying housing stock, building new homes, converting non-residential properties, and refurbishing dilapidated or empty homes.

Our work is not done yet. The crisis in Ukraine continues and I urge anyone who is able to to come forward and volunteer as a sponsor

Housing and homelessness minister Felicity Buchan

Amid the funding for housing, councils will receive a lower tariff payment for each Ukrainian refugee who arrives into their local area – £5,900 per person, down from £10,500.

This money can be spent on safeguarding and accommodation checks, support to help refugees rebuild their lives and integrate, and education and skills support, such as English language courses.

Secretary of State Michael Gove said: “We have stood firm with Ukraine but we owe special thanks to the tens of thousands of families across the UK who opened their homes and their hearts to Ukrainians fleeing war.

“In recognition of their ongoing support, I’m pleased to confirm that they will see their ‘thank you’ payments uplifted for their second year of sponsorship.”

Housing and homelessness minister Felicity Buchan said: “Hosting a Ukrainian family is a massive commitment and, from the amazing sponsors I’ve met, I also know that the rising cost of living is putting additional pressures on both household and local finances.

“That is why we are increasing ‘thank you’ payments to keep this incredibly successful programme going.

“But our work is not done yet. The crisis in Ukraine continues and I urge anyone who is able to to come forward and volunteer as a sponsor.”

The promise of more financial support for hosts is welcomed, as most households I am in touch with are delighted to be hosting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** but the cost-of-living crisis has added unforeseen financial pressure on them

Dr Krish Kandiah, The Sanctuary Foundation

The Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain said: “Ukrainians everywhere are grateful to the Government and the British people for opening their homes and hearts to Ukrainians fleeing their homes as a result of Russia’s illegal invasion of Ukraine.

“We welcome today’s announcement, which recognises the commitment of sponsors during difficult economic times, and will provide additional support and reassurance to Ukrainian families as they rebuild their lives and seek to overcome the trauma of war.”

Dr Krish Kandiah, a host and director of The Sanctuary Foundation, which helps refugees and sponsors, said: “The promise of more financial support for hosts is welcomed, as most households I am in touch with are delighted to be hosting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** but the cost-of-living crisis has added unforeseen financial pressure on them.

“The £500 million fund to invest in housing is a brilliant innovation that will help Ukrainians and Afghans fleeing conflict but also, importantly, local people at risk of homelessness.”

**Load-Date:** December 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Anxious about refugees, Polish cities reject memorial sirens*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6564-6MY1-DY4H-K0JM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 9, 2022 Saturday 7:45 PM GMT

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**Length:** 394 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Anxious about the wellbeing of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, city mayors across Poland are refusing the government's instructions to sound air raid sirens as part of memorial observances for a 2010 presidential plane crash

**Body**

Anxious about the wellbeing of their ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, city mayors across Poland are refusing the government's instructions to sound air raid alarm sirens Sunday as part of memorial observances for Poland's 2010 presidential plane crash.

The right-wing central government wants the sirens to go off at 0641 GMT Sunday, the exact time the plane crashed in Russia 12 years ago, killing President [*Lech Kaczynski*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lech-kaczynski) and 95 other prominent Poles.

Kaczynski was the twin of [*Jaroslaw Kaczynski*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jaroslaw-kaczynski) , who is the ruling Law and Justice party's leader and Poland's key politician.

But city mayors, who represent local governments, are refusing to do that, saying it will be an unnecessary trauma for people - especially children - who recently fled their homes at the sound of air raid sirens and headed to shelters to avoid Russian bombings since it attacked Ukraine on Feb. 24.

More than 2.5 million refugees from Ukraine have sought security in neighboring Poland and are staying at special reception centers or with private people. Many need psychological assistance to deal with their trauma.

[*Polish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/polish) Prime Minister [*Mateusz Morawiecki*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mateusz-morawiecki) insisted Saturday that the 2010 plane crash was a national tragedy and its victims merit every form of commemoration. He said text messages were being sent to refugees to explain that the sirens mean no danger.

Amid Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Polish government is reviving its controversial allegation that the crash on April 10, 2010, which killed the president, the first lady and other leading political figures, was a Kremlin assassination plan. Sunday's observances are being given special attention.

But local governments, often run by opposition politicians, say the use of air raid sirens for the anniversary is "extremely irresponsible."

The sirens also bring frightful associations to many Poles who either experienced World War II as small children or watched documentaries of the country's destruction during the war.

"We will not sound the sirens on the anniversary," said Rafal Bruski, mayor of the central city of Bydgoszcz. "I have seen too many children terrified by war."

Bruski said he has grown accustomed to many "unwise" decisions by the current right-wing government "but there are limits to stupidity."

\_\_\_

Follow all [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) stories about developments in the war in Ukraine at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine).

**Load-Date:** April 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Minister fails to clarify if cut in Ukraine support could make more homeless*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69W7-F111-JBNF-W0KJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

December 15, 2023 Friday 2:23 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 812 words

**Byline:** By Grinne N. Aodha

**Highlight:** Darragh O’Brien said that the Government was ‘working as a collective’ on the issue.

**Body**

Housing [*Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/minister) Darragh O’Brien would not clarify whether he expected homeless figures to rise in response to the cut to support for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving in Ireland.

The minister said that the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) is “working as a collective” to house ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, and admitted that there had been “challenges” to the Government’s response.

The changes, which will come into force at the end of January, will see state accommodation being provided to arriving Ukrainians for a maximum of 90 days, where it had previously been provided without limit.

Speaking to reporters on Friday, Mr O’Brien said: “We’re working as a collective in Government on this.

It’s our job to provide accommodation where we can for everyone who seeks it, and that’s our main focus

Housing Minister Darragh O’Brien

“I think we’ve got to recognise that between our friends from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and others who are fleeing persecution that this country has been able to accommodate over 100,000 people in just over a year.

“I think that hasn’t been without its challenges. But that really speaks to the welcome that Ireland has given to people who are seeking safe and secure harbour here as well.“We’ll be working with our colleagues and we continue to do that to ensure that all the supports our local authorities can give are given.

“We work on a daily basis there as well. So, “the changes that have been agreed at [*Cabinet*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cabinet) will come forward early next year. We will work with with our colleagues in the Department of Children.”

When asked if he was not as confident as Minister for Children Roderic O’Gorman, who said that homeless figures would not rise, he said: “Changes haven’t come in.

“It’s our job to provide accommodation where we can for everyone who seeks it, and that’s our main focus.”

Earlier, Ukraine’s ambassador to Ireland said she understands the Government’s decision to cut support for people fleeing Russia’s invasion.

The Government has provided state accommodation to Ukrainians arriving in Ireland for an unlimited amount of time, and a weekly social welfare rate of 220 euro a week, since the war broke out in February 2022.

Last week ministers agreed that from the end of January state accommodation will only be provided for up to 90 days.

I understand this decision. I have, of course, my concerns as well, because in 90 days it would be very difficult to find accommodation for newcomers

Ukrainian ambassador to Ireland Larysa Gerasko

During that period, arrivals will be paid a 38.80 euro subsistence allowance and an additional 29.80 per child per week; once they leave state accommodation they are entitled to apply for social welfare.

No changes are being made for the 100,000 Ukrainian nationals who are already living in Ireland.

Ukrainian ambassador to Ireland Larysa Gerasko said that while she understood the decision, she has concerns about what will happen to Ukrainian nationals after the 90 days.

“I’m fully aware about the housing crisis and the shortage of accommodation for Ukrainians, and not only Ukrainians,” she told RTE Radio.

“I understand this decision. I have, of course, my concerns as well, because in 90 days it would be very difficult to find accommodation for newcomers.”

Asked whether the decision would deter people from coming to Ireland, she said: “I think so, yes.”

She said she had requested the “official” version of the decision from the Department of Foreign Affairs.

“We have to analyse this decision and send appropriate messages to Ukrainians in Ukraine, and recommendations of course.”

She said her embassy would use a variety of ways and do “everything possible” to deliver the information to Ukrainians not just about the 90-day limit, but also about the difficulty in finding accommodation in Ireland.

Announcing the decision last week, Integration Minister Roderic O’Gorman said he expected fewer Ukrainian nationals to arrive in Ireland as a result, but that it would not cause a rise in homelessness.

The Government has said the measures are being taken because of housing supply pressure, and Ireland continues to expect about 500 arrivals per week.

More than 101,200 people have arrived from Ukraine since the Russian invasion began in February 2022, with 74,500 Ukrainians living in state accommodation and 57,000 in fully serviced accommodation.

More than 16,000 are currently in employment, according to Government figures.

Mr O’Gorman said that reception centres would be set up to house people for 90 days, where meals and laundry services would be provided as well as integration support and access to education for children.

He said that the changes would bring the [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) offering “into line” with other western European countries, some of which, he said, had not welcomed as many Ukrainians as Ireland on a proportionate basis.

Government figures indicate that Ireland now hosts 2.3% of all beneficiaries of temporary protection in the EU.

**Load-Date:** December 15, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Zelensky praises Mila Kunis and Ashton Kutcher for £26m Ukraine appeal*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6521-3FH1-JBNF-W0C9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 21, 2022 Monday 9:07 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,TV & RADIO,CULTURE; Version:1

**Length:** 385 words

**Byline:** Maanya Sachdeva

**Highlight:** Ukrainian president thanked the actors for being 'among the first to respond to our grief' via video call

**Body**

Ukrainian president [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) has thanked [*Mila Kunis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mila-kunis) and [*Ashton Kutcher*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ashton-kutcher) for "their support" after they raised nearly $35m (£2m) for the war-torn country.

The couple spoke with Zelensky via video call following their [*efforts to secure public donations*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/mila-kunis-ukraine-nationality-family-russia-b2034464.html%22%20title=%22How%20Mila%20Kunis's%20family%20left%20Ukraine%20for%20the%20US,%20as%20she%20launches%20fundraiser%20for%20Ukrainian%20refugees) to help supply humanitarian aid to Ukrainians displaced by Russian president Vladimir Putin's ongoing invasion, now in its fourth week.

On Sunday (20 March), Zelensky shared a photo on Twitter taken during the call, praising them as "among the first to respond to our grief."

He continued: "They have already raised $35m & are sending it to @flexport & @[*Airbnb*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/airbnb) to help (***Ukrainian***) ***refugees***."

"Grateful for their support. Impressed by their determination. They inspire the world," he added, with the hashtag #StandWithUkraine.

Earlier this month, the couple committed to matching donations made to rental company Airbnb and freight transporter Flexport up to $3m (£2.2m), with the aim of raising $30m (£22.7m).

They reached[*their target on Thursday (17 March)*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/culture/mila-kunis-ashton-kutcher-fundraising-ukraine-b2033954.html%22%20title=%22Mila%20Kunis%20and%20Ashton%20Kutcher%20have%20nearly%20hit%20$30m%20Ukraine%20fundraising%20goal) with the total continuing to grow.

Kunis described herself as a "proud Ukrainian" as she launched the fundraiser. Kunis was born in Chernivtsi, Ukraine in 1983, before moving with her family to the USA in 1991.

We are overwhelmed with gratitude for your support. 2 weeks ago, we asked you to join us and more than 65,000 of you stepped up and donated what you could. Now, with your help we have reached our $30 million goal. (1/5) [*pic.twitter.com/zQfQ1BNWZm*](https://t.co/zQfQ1BNWZm) - ashton kutcher (@aplusk) [*March 17, 2022*](https://twitter.com/aplusk/status/1504508504677109794?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

At the time, she wrote: "Ukrainians are proud and brave people who deserve our help in their time of need. This unjust attack on Ukraine and humanity at large is devastating and the Ukrainian people need our support."

Kunis and Kutcher, who married in 2015 and share two children, promised to do "everything we can" to ensure that the money "finds maximum impact with those in need".

Fellow celebrity couple [*Ryan Reynolds*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ryan-reynolds) and [*Blake Lively*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/blake-lively) also [*previously pledged to match donations up to $1m (£750,000)*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/news/ryan-reynolds-blake-lively-ukraine-refugees-donations-b2024269.html%22%20title=%22Ryan%20Reynolds%20and%20Blake%20Lively%20pledge%20to%20match%20donations%20for%20Ukrainian%20refugees%20up%20to%20$1m) to support ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

They urged people to donate to humanitarian charity US for UNHCR to help the thousands of citizens displaced by the war, promising to double the amount raised.

Additional reporting by Press Association

**Load-Date:** March 21, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Oleksandr Petrakov ‘truly moved’ by the reception his team received in Dublin*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65N3-8071-DY4H-K045-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 9, 2022 Thursday 1:00 PM GMT

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**Section:** FOOTBALL,SPORT; Version:1

**Length:** 390 words

**Byline:** Damian Spellman

**Highlight:** Thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** were among the crowd at the Aviva Stadium.

**Body**

Ukraine boss Oleksandr Petrakov was ‘truly moved’ by the welcome his team received for the [*Nations League*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nations-league) match in Dublin.

The 64-year-old guided his side to a 1-0 victory over the [*Republic*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/republic) at the Aviva Stadium on Wednesday evening, with around 3,500 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** among the crowd.

However, it was the response he received before the game which humbled him.

Petrakov said: “I was walking in the morning and the [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) people were approaching me, wishing me all the best.

“I was truly moved by the Irish attitude towards the Ukrainians and I want to wish all the best not only to the Irish team, but to the whole of Ireland.

I was truly moved by the Irish attitude towards the Ukrainians and I want to wish all the best not only to the Irish team, but to the whole of Ireland

Oleksandr Petrakov

“We’ll see the Irish on the 14th of this month in Lodz in Poland.”

The sides will reconvene on Tuesday evening for the return fixture with Ukraine hoping to have added to their points tally in the meantime against Armenia on Saturday as Ireland attempt to belatedly open their account against [*Scotland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scotland) at the Aviva.

Petrakov chose to rest 10 of the men who had started Sunday’s 1-0 defeat in [*Wales*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wales) which ended their hopes of World Cup qualification, and revealed he would have changed all 11 had Eduard Sobol not been struck by illness.

In the event, only Everton’s Vitaliy Mykolenko was retained and seven men were handed competitive debuts at senior international level.

Petrakov said: “I spoke to Vitaliy, who I have known since he was a boy, and despite the fact that he played that extremely difficult game in Cardiff he said, ‘I’ll help the team. Not to worry, I’ll be playing with those new players’.

“He did and clearly he added performance and confidence to the national team debutants.

“In order not to harm the boys who left everything on the football pitch back in Wales, I decided to field young players who needed to get some first-hand experience of big games.

“I’m very happy happy they debuted and they debuted with a win. We’ll look into some mistakes, clearly, which we had, but overall I’m happy with the result, I’m happy with their attitude and performance.

“It’s a very positive thing that happened to our team, especially after a bitter result in Wales. We tuned the page, we’re going forward and we’ll look forward to our future.”

**Load-Date:** June 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*One dead and several injured after bus carrying 50 Ukrainians overturns in Italy*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6509-NCN1-DY4H-K378-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 13, 2022 Sunday 10:46 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 387 words

**Byline:** Maryam Zakir-Hussain

**Highlight:** Rescue operations are still underway after the bus overturned in Italy

**Body**

A woman has died after a bus carrying around 50 Ukrainian nationals has overturned in Italy, according to local reports.

The accident happened on the north eastern coast on the highway between Cesena and Rimini when one vehicle went off the road.

Pictures posted by the fire fighters on Twitter show the overturned bus.

Rescue operations remain underway as crews are now working to remove the body of a young woman from the crash, local media site Cronache Della Campania reported.

The news site added that the accident was reported shortly before 6.45am local time, on the A14 motorway.

An Italian state radio reported that the accident happened near the town of Forli' which is in the region of Emilia-Romagna bordering the Adriatic Sea.

Around 35,000 Ukrainians refugees who fled the war have entered Italy, most of them through its northeastern border with Slovenia.

More than 2.5 million people have fled Ukraine, U.N. agencies said on Friday, and a further 2 million have been displaced from their homes within the country since the start of a Russian invasion on Feb. 24.

Poland has welcomed the largest number of refugees with over 1.5 million fleeing Ukrainians entering the neighbouring country's borders, according to the UN Refugee Agency.

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** face uncertain journeys in seeking refuge as multiple attempts at ceasefires and humanitarian corridors have been broken, with photos emerging last week of three members from one[*family died after an explosion*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/tatiana-perebeinis-ukraine-russia-dead-b2032527.html%22%20title=%22Mother%20shown%20dead%20on%20the%20street%20alongside%20her%20children%20in%20horror%20Ukraine%20photo%20was%20a%20Silicon%20Valley%20worker) hit a supposedly safe corridor.

Britons are now being encouraged to open their homes to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who arrive in the UK [*with a £350 per month payment*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-refugees-uk-money-government-b2034654.html%22%20title=%22Britons%20offered%20£350%20a%20month%20by%20government%20to%20open%20their%20homes%20to%20Ukrainian%20refugees) by the government.

The Homes for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) scheme, to be rolled out this week, will allow individuals, charities, community groups and businesses to bring people fleeing the war to safety - even if they have no ties to the UK.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here.*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Ftopic%2Frefugees-welcome-0&data=04%7C01%7CKaty.Clifton%40independent.co.uk%7C2a2d4959602a48a7514408d9fbc3eb4d%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637817641167117856%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=RZ7crcxX9U9jftiU38S4VVIl8uiLT6BXiwvDblkPG%2Fo%3D&reserved=0)

**Load-Date:** March 13, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Our refugee campaign has been embraced by readers; We'll keep pushing for the government to provide sanctuary for displaced Ukrainian people, writes Harriet Williamson*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y1-Y1J1-JCS0-D43P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 7, 2022 Monday

Third Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 30

**Length:** 376 words

**Byline:** HARRIET WILLIAMSON

**Body**

A massive thank you to everyone who has supported our Refugees Welcome campaign so far. More than 130,000 people have already signed our petition, calling on the UK government to provide aid and support to the people of Ukraine in their hour of need.

Thanks to your generosity, we have also raised over £100,000 for charities on the ground in Ukraine and neighbouring countries. Last Thursday, the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) Ukrainian Humanitarian Appeal was launched, bringing together 13 leading UK aid charities, including the Red Cross and Save the Children, the two groups we have supported so far.

On Voices, we have had Lord Alf Dubs, Lib Dem MP Layla Moran and much-loved children's author Michael Rosen writing in support of our campaign. The government must do more to make the UK a safe haven for refugees - and provide sanctuary for displaced Ukrainian people, fleeing the horror and devastation of war.

On Sunday, the home secretary, Priti Patel, was urged to send emergency help for at least 150 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** stranded in Calais. Women and children were turned away and told to get visas at UK consulates in Paris or Brussels. French interior minister Gerald Darmanin accused the UK of "lacking humanity" in a strongly worded letter to Patel.

EU countries have opened their borders to all ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. They don't need visas. They can come as they are and receive sanctuary.

According to the UN, 1.5 million Ukrainians have been forced to leave their homes after the invasion by Russian forces. Most have entered Poland, Moldova, Slovakia, Romania and Hungary. UNHCR, the UN's refugee agency, estimates that more than 4 million people will be displaced by the conflict. It is likely that the refugee crisis is only just beginning.

Please keep sharing our petition, keep reading and talking - and listening. Listen to the experiences of those who know what it means to leave everything behind, with no choice but to rely on the humanity of strangers and strange governments. Stay generous. Stay open-hearted.

If shells were falling on your home and you had to flee to another country, carrying your children, your pets and a few scant belongings, how would you want to be received?

Yours,

Harriet Williamson

Voices commissioning editor

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Envoy urges UK to lift visa rules for Ukrainians fleeing war*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YG-YNH1-DY4H-K28B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 9, 2022 Wednesday 6:00 PM GMT

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**Length:** 369 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Ukraine's ambassador to Britain has urged the government to suspend visa requirements for Ukrainians fleeing the war, after the U.K. acknowledged that fewer than 1,000 visas have been handed out so far

**Body**

Ukraine's ambassador to Britain urged the government on Wednesday to suspend visa requirements for Ukrainians fleeing the war, after the U.K. acknowledged that fewer than 1,000 visas have been handed out so far.

Ambassador Vadym Prystaiko told lawmakers that "if you can vote for some temporary releasing of us from these rules, to allow people to get here, we will take care of (them)."

Britain's [*Conservative*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/conservative) government says it is prepared to take in hundreds of thousands of refugees from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine). As of Wednesday, there had been 22,000 visa applications. But the number of visas granted was just below 1,000, with the rest of the applications still being processed.

In contrast, 2,500 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have already arrived in Ireland, whose population is a tenth of the U.K.'s

Critics say Britain's asylum system is in chaos, with reports of Ukrainians struggling to get the paperwork to let them join family and friends in Britain.

[*European*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) Union nations are allowing Ukrainians to live and work for up to three years without having to go through a formal asylum-seeking process. The U.K., which left the bloc last year, isn't waiving the paperwork, saying applicants must submit biometric data for security reasons.

Ukrainians arriving at the English Channel port of Calais in France have been told to apply at British missions in Paris or Brussels, while others say they have been waiting for days for appointments at U.K. embassies in eastern Europe.

The British government says it is setting up a new visa center in Lille, northwest France, that will start work on Thursday. Defense Secretary [*Ben Wallace*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ben-wallace) said Wednesday that he has offered to lend troops to the Home Office to help speed up the process.

Ukrainians based in Britain can bring over family members, including spouses, parents and children. The government has also announced a separate route for groups in the U.K. to sponsor ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, but details of that were still being worked out.

The [*United Nations*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/united-nations) says more than 2 million people have fled the war in Ukraine, in what it calls Europe's fastest-growing refugee crisis since World War II.

\_\_\_

Follow the AP's coverage of the Russia-Ukraine war at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Our refugee campaign has been embraced by readers; We'll keep pushing for the government to provide sanctuary for displaced Ukrainian people, writes Harriet Williamson*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y0-MC51-F072-411X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 7, 2022 Monday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 29

**Length:** 376 words

**Byline:** HARRIET WILLIAMSON

**Body**

A massive thank you to everyone who has supported our Refugees Welcome campaign so far. More than 130,000 people have already signed our petition, calling on the UK government to provide aid and support to the people of Ukraine in their hour of need.

Thanks to your generosity, we have also raised over £100,000 for charities on the ground in Ukraine and neighbouring countries. Last Thursday, the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) Ukrainian Humanitarian Appeal was launched, bringing together 13 leading UK aid charities, including the Red Cross and Save the Children, the two groups we have supported so far.

On Voices, we have had Lord Alf Dubs, Lib Dem MP Layla Moran and much-loved children's author Michael Rosen writing in support of our campaign. The government must do more to make the UK a safe haven for refugees - and provide sanctuary for displaced Ukrainian people, fleeing the horror and devastation of war.

On Sunday, the home secretary, Priti Patel, was urged to send emergency help for at least 150 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** stranded in Calais. Women and children were turned away and told to get visas at UK consulates in Paris or Brussels. French interior minister Gerald Darmanin accused the UK of "lacking humanity" in a strongly worded letter to Patel.

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According to the UN, 1.5 million Ukrainians have been forced to leave their homes after the invasion by Russian forces. Most have entered Poland, Moldova, Slovakia, Romania and Hungary. UNHCR, the UN's refugee agency, estimates that more than 4 million people will be displaced by the conflict. It is likely that the refugee crisis is only just beginning.

Please keep sharing our petition, keep reading and talking - and listening. Listen to the experiences of those who know what it means to leave everything behind, with no choice but to rely on the humanity of strangers and strange governments. Stay generous. Stay open-hearted.

If shells were falling on your home and you had to flee to another country, carrying your children, your pets and a few scant belongings, how would you want to be received?

Yours,

Harriet Williamson

Voices commissioning editor

**Load-Date:** March 6, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Still 'major gaps' in Ukraine visa scheme despite U-turn*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YV-H211-JCS0-D30R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 11, 2022 Friday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 3

**Length:** 1025 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

Priti Patel's changes to Britain's scheme for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** do not go "anywhere near far enough" to give proper support to those fleeing conflict, the government has been warned. In a move to simplify the system, the home secretary announced that, from Tuesday, those who have fled the Russian invasion and hold passports will no longer need to go to a visa application centre to submit their fingerprints and documents before they come to the UK.

But experts have said there are "still major gaps" in the government's support for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, warning that people would still be required to go through a "chaotic and frustrating" online application process and calling for "urgent clarity" on who will benefit in practice. Lawyers said many Ukrainians do not currently have passports and are still likely to seek out visa application centres for help with the "confusing" process of filling out applications.

The Independent's Refugees Welcome campaign is calling for the government to go further and faster to help Ukrainians fleeing the war, with more than 183,000 people signing our petition asking ministers to provide more supplies of food, clothing and shelter for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and to do more to make the UK a safe haven for them.

Announcing the change in the House of Commons yesterday, the home secretary said it would mean visa application centres across Europe could "focus their efforts on helping Ukrainians without passports". It is not clear how many Ukrainians do not have passports. In the five years to 2021, 16.6 million Ukrainians were issued an international passport, of a population of 44 million.

The announcement came amid mounting concerns about "unnecessary delays and bureaucracy" in the visa application process for the UK's family visa scheme, which was opened last Friday. Many refugees have been forced towait for hours in the coldand travel for miles in order to complete the requirement of submitting their biometric information.

Shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper said the changes to the scheme would be a "relief for many", but that they "don't yet go far enough".

"There will still be problems at visa centres and many people [are] still excluded from help. The chaotic government response puts us to shame," she said.

Kerry Garcia, head of immigration at law firm Stevens & Bolton, who is supporting eight Ukrainians with UK visa applications on a pro bono basis, told The Independent that while the change was "helpful", it did not remove the requirement for people who have fled conflict to go through a "confusing and frustrating" online application system in order to apply.

"People still need to access an online system that doesn't work very well at the best of time. It is not fit for purpose for this many applications being submitted at the same time. It crashes, you can't upload documents," she said. "There are all sorts of practical difficulties. This is a system designed for normal system of immigration, not for a refugee crisis."

Ms Garcia, whose Ukrainian clients have all now submitted their online applications but have not yet had their visa appointments because there are often none available for weeks, said ministers must also "clarify urgently" how the change would affect people in practice.

"In particular they must clarify how it affects people who have already applied, how the system will work in terms of processing documents, and also anticipated processing times. It's one thing to say you can now apply digitally, but the big question is how long do you have to wait in your Airbnb using up in some cases your life savings?" she said.

Amy Stokes, head of business immigration at Forbes Solicitors, said digital visas would do little to avoid the need for Ukrainians to make their applications in person at visa application centres. "Applying digitally sounds great in theory but will do little to stem the confusion about whether a person meets the visa eligibility criteria," she said.

Ukraine's ambassador to the UK Vadym Prystaiko told MPs on Wednesday that if bureaucratic procedures in the visa scheme were "simplified" it would "definitely resolve all the issues".

Marley Morris, IPPR associate director for migration, trade and communities, said there were "still major gaps" in the UK's support for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. "The government should follow the lead of Canada and the EU by offering temporary protection to all Ukrainians who want to apply. At the same time, it should urgently investigate how to further streamline the visa process, or simply lift visa requirements altogether," he added.

Madeleine Sumption, director of the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford, said: "It was clear from government data that securing in-person appointments was one of the obstacles preventing eligible Ukrainians from getting a visa to come to the UK.

"However, it was only one of the factors - and there are still other bottlenecks, including the need to gather all the documents and information required to prove eligibility. The next big question is how quickly the Home Office will be able to ramp-up processing as the applications increase."

Boris Johnson insisted the visa scheme was as "light touch" as possible but stressed the need for security checks on people fleeing Ukraine. He told reporters yesterday: "I think people do understand that when you have got large numbers of people leaving from a war zone - some of them still armed, perhaps not all of their identities completely clear, their motivations completely clear - it is responsible to have checks."

"More than a thousand" visas had been granted by Wednesday and the numbers were going to "climb very steeply", Mr Johnson said.

But Andy Hewett, head of advocacy at the Refugee Council, said the change to the visa scheme did not go "anywhere near far enough". He added: "Rather than continuing with a system thatrequiresUkrainian refugees to apply for a visa, the government urgently needs to temporarily waive visa requirements so that all Ukrainian families fleeing war and bloodshed can easily reach the UK and access the protection that is their fundamental rightunder the Refugee Convention."

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Government should chip in to help Ukraine Family Scheme members, charity says*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6673-7FX1-JBNF-W0Y3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 23, 2022 Tuesday 2:08 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 770 words

**Byline:** Isobel Frodsham

**Highlight:** The British Red Cross has been supporting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** since their arrival earlier this year.

**Body**

The [*British Red Cross*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british-red-cross) is calling on the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) to give money to UK residents who have helped support their families after they fled Ukraine in February.

The charity, which has been providing cash assistance, sim cards and signposting to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving in the UK following Russia’s invasion of the country, said payments should be given to members of the Ukraine Family Scheme in the same way that the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine supporters receive cash.

The Homes for Ukraine scheme, which sees [*Britons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britons) welcoming refugees into their homes, currently gives guests a £200 welcome payment and hosts £350 a month as a “thank you” payment for supporting the refugees.

Councils also receive £10,500 under the scheme.

However, under the Ukraine Family Scheme, where British-Ukrainian residents support their family who have left the nation since the invasion in February, these payments are not provided.

Currently, the Government says hosts in the Homes for Ukraine scheme can receive the monthly payment of £350 for “up to 12 months, paid in arrears, for as long as you are hosting your guests and provided that the accommodation provided is of a suitable standard”.

Richard Blewitt, executive director of the British Red Cross, said: “We’re encouraging the UK Government to step up its financial support given the scale of the economic crisis here in the UK and the cost-of-living crisis, particularly for the hosts.

“With the Ukraine Family Scheme, which actually doesn’t involve any money from the Government, maybe the Government is going to have to chip in a bit to help those families also who are hosting many Ukrainians.”

The charity has also raised concerns about the arrival of winter for Ukrainians who stayed in the country following the outbreak of the war and remain displaced six months on.

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are eligible to apply for Universal Credit from day one and the PA news agency understands early payments can be made to prevent a five-week delay. [*Refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) in these schemes will also get an additional £200 payment while their claim is processed.

A Government spokesman said: “Taken together, our generous Homes for Ukraine and Ukraine Family schemes are one of the fastest and biggest visa programmes in UK history, with over 175,000 visas issued and more expected to come through these uncapped routes.

“We expect Ukrainians entering the UK through the Ukraine Family Scheme to be primarily supported by family members, but they are also entitled to three years’ leave to remain and full access to work, study and benefits – including Universal Credit.

“Local authorities have a duty to provide support to people on the family scheme, including homelessness where required.”

The Disasters Emergency Committee, which raises funds for 13 charities helping Ukrainians overseas including the Red Cross, meanwhile said on Tuesday its online campaign has now reached £380 million since it was first launched.

The money raised goes towards giving medical support, food, water and cash to people inside Ukraine and in neighbouring countries who have been left traumatised by the conflict.

It also funds keeping vulnerable people, including women, children, older people and people with disabilities, safe.

Saleh Saeed, chief executive of the Disasters Emergency Committee, said: “This incredible, generous support has meant that our member charities have been able to help hundreds of thousands of people affected by this complete conflict with vital aid.

“It’s enabled us to mobilise a huge response through the work of our 13 member charities and their local partners inside Ukraine, including through partnerships with the Ukrainian Ministry of Health and by empowering local people and local organisations.”

Mr Saeed added that he believed British people would still continue to donate towards the fund to help Ukrainians get through the winter despite any financial concerns they may have as a result of the cost of living crisis.

“I think what we’ve seen time and time again, during major humanitarian crises overseas, is that the British public has been very, very supportive,” he said.

“We’ve seen in previous financial crises, whether that was in 2008 or elsewhere, that when it comes to humanitarian action, the UK public are very supportive and do recognise that despite our hardships here … people still want to reach into their pockets and give as generously as they can.”

He added that those who are unable to afford to donate money find alternative ways to support the cause, such as organising fundraising events and activities.

“It’s incredible, thank you to everyone that has contributed,” he added.

**Load-Date:** August 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine war: Two thirds of Brits want government to set up refugee resettlement scheme, poll shows*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64VY-GJM1-DY4H-K24W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 25, 2022 Friday 7:44 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 958 words

**Byline:** Lizzie Dearden

**Highlight:** Government to back law criminalising asylum seekers arriving in UK 'without permission' in parliament next week

**Body**

Almost two thirds of British people want the government to resettle ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) , polling has found as ministers refuse to set up a scheme.

Research carried out by YouGov following the Russian invasion on Thursday found that 63 per cent of Britons would support the introduction of a resettlement scheme for those fleeing, and only 18 per cent are opposed.

There is [*currently no safe and legal route*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-war-refugees-uk-visas-b2022567.html%22%20title=%22Britain%20fails%20to%20set%20up%20refugee%20route%20as%20thousands%20flee%20Ukraine%20after%20Russian%20invasion) for Ukranians to travel directly from the country to the UK in order to seek asylum, unless they have close British relatives.

Yvette Cooper, Labour's shadow home secretary, said the war was "already having devastating consequences".

"The UK has a duty to work with our allies to provide humanitarian assistance and support to those fleeing this horrific situation," she added.

"We must also work with the UN Refugee Agency to make sure contingency plans are ready for further support and sanctuary schemes that will be needed and be prepared to play our part in further international action to support refugees."

Britain has stopped accepting visa applications from Ukrainians who are stuck in the country, as hundreds of thousands are displaced or flee to neighbouring nations.

On Friday, a Downing Street spokesperson said the government had deployed troops to help the humanitarian response in Poland and was "working incredibly closely with [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) 's neighbours to help support them and Ukrainians fleeing the country".

But they would not be drawn on any further action when asked about safe and legal routes for those wanting to seek asylum in the UK.

When asked by YouGov how many ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** should be accepted, 17 per cent said a "few thousand", while 14 per cent said tens of thousands and 9 per cent were willing to welcome hundreds of thousands.

The polling showed a majority of both Conservative and Labour voters supported a dedicated resettlement scheme, although Labour voters were more likely to be in support.

Asked whether they believed the UK has a moral obligation to offer asylum to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, half of Britons said it does and under a third said it does not.

The Independent understands that the government expects many Ukrainians to stay in Eastern Europe in the short term, or travel to Schengen countries where they can stay visa-free for 90 days, and is not immediately bracing for a rise in small boat crossings.

Ministers are pressing ahead with plans to make arriving in the UK "without permission" a criminal offence punishable up to four years in prison, which would apply equally to [*asylum seekers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/asylum-seekers-0) of all nationalities.

The measures are contained in the controversial Nationality and Borders Bill, which will be voted on in the House of Lords next week.

The Scottish National Party called for the plans to be scrapped on Friday, and for the creation of safe routes for Ukrainians.

Its shadow home secretary Stuart McDonald said: "While the situation is fast moving, we are clearly going to see a significant movement of refugees from Ukraine into neighbouring EU countries and beyond.

"I urge the UK government to bring forward a serious humanitarian response plan including safe legal routes to the UK. This must include much broader rights for Ukrainian nationals to join both British and Ukrainian family members who are already here in the UK - rather than expecting them to seek asylum in Poland, away from their families.

"And it must also make clear we are willing and prepared to take ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** here."

Mr McDonald said the Nationality and Borders Bill was an "attack on the Refugee Convention" that must be scrapped before it criminalises Ukrainians trying to reach Britain.

Sonya Sceats, chief executive at Freedom from Torture, said: "Despite pledges of support for people fleeing Ukraine, Boris Johnson preparing to pass a borders bill that will criminalise and deny protection to Ukrainians who make their own way to safety in the UK. "Make no mistake, any parliamentarian who votes in favour of this bill is voting to slam the door in the face of Ukrainian men, women and children in need."

The bill follows a change to immigration rules meaning that asylum applications from people who have temporarily resided in safe third countries can be declared "inadmissible".

That means that Ukranians who are forced to travel to countries such as Poland for immediate safety, or in order to obtain UK visas, may later be refused asylum and threatened with deportation.

Official statistics released on Thursday showed the number of asylum claims made in the UK at the highest level in nearly two decades, while the backlog of cases waiting to be determined continues to soar.

Almost three quarters of asylum claims were granted on an initial decision, and almost half of appeals were successful.

A Home Office document said the increase in applications was linked to the easing of Covid travel restrictions "and to a sharp increase in small boat arrivals to the UK", of which "almost all claim asylum".

In total, more than 28,5000 people crossed the Channel on small boats in 2021 -triple the number in 2020.

A government spokesperson said: "The government's priority remains supporting British Nationals and their families who want to leave Ukraine. We are working around the clock to process visa applications.

"Two weeks ago, the home secretary ordered a package of measures, including waiving the application fee for immediate family members of British nationals living in Ukraine who apply under the Family Migration route, and setting up a bespoke helpline to support immediate family members of British nationals who are eligible through the route.

"On Thursday, changes were introduced to support Ukrainian nationals currently in the UK who are now unable to return home."

**Load-Date:** February 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Starmer: 'Depressing situation in Ukraine' will 'change politics for long time'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651V-F871-DY4H-K1FB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 20, 2022 Sunday 5:14 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 712 words

**Byline:** Isobel Frodsham

**Highlight:** Sir Keir was speaking at a launch of the Labour campaign for May local elections in north west London.

**Body**

[*Labour*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/labour) leader Sir Keir Starmer said the "desperately depressing situation in Ukraine" is going to "change politics for a long time to come".

Sir Keir was speaking at a launch of the Labour campaign for May local elections at the Greenwood Centre in north west [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london) , when he reflected on the war between [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) and [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and how the UK should help refugees.

Belsize Park candidate in Camden, Peter Ptashko, told the crowd he has family members that are currently in the north western part of Ukraine, near Kyiv.

He then requested for a minute's silence to be held for those still in Ukraine and others who are fleeing.

Sir Keir, who is the MP for the nearby seat of Holborn and St Pancras, told the crowd: "Peter, thank you for allowing us time to just stop and reflect on the position in Ukraine...it is a desperately depressing situation in Ukraine.

"I remember how I felt when the Berlin Wall came down, that sense of freedom, of something big changing in the world, of countries being free again to decide for themselves, how they decided their own futures, the alliances that they made with other countries, that sense that once that wall came down, nothing like that could happen again.

"I did not think that in my lifetime, I would ever see again Russian tanks going into a European country.

"Soldiers kissing their children goodbye as they stay to fight for their cities and for their country.

"And the desperation of families fleeing across the border, I didn't think I would see that again...this is going to change our politics for a very, very long time to come and that's why it's so important that we support the Ukrainians and everything that they are courageously trying to do."

He called again for the "strongest possible sanctions" to be put in place against Russia and to help the refugees.

Referring to the Government's [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine scheme which was launched on Friday, he added: "I have no problem with an ad hoc scheme that allows people to take refugees into their homes.

"Of course I don't, but we need much, much more than that."

Sir Keir said a "serious supportive package" is required, working with local councils and housing providers, to help give the ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** the "full support they need" as they arrive in the UK.

The Government has imposed a range of sanctions against Russia since the outbreak of the war on February 24, including full asset freezes on Russian banks.

An update to the Gov.uk website on Tuesday said that 350 new listings had been made under the Russia sanctions regime.

The list of those sanctioned was expanded to include a further 51 Russian oligarchs and their families, plus a raft of politicians and "propagandists".

The Homes for Ukraine scheme allows Britons to provide accommodation for someone fleeing the war zone.

Announcing the scheme last week, Communities Secretary Michael Gove said "in recognition of their generosity" a tax-free monthly payment of £350 will be provided to people for each family they look after.

He told MPs Ukrainians will be able to live and work in the UK for up to three years under the scheme, with "full and unrestricted access to benefits, healthcare, employment and other support".

The scheme is open to Ukrainian nationals and immediate family members who were residents prior to January 1. A total of 150,000 people have expressed their interest in becoming a sponsor to house ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** so far, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities said.

Friday also marked the launch of the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme, which allows ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** without family members in the UK to apply for a visa.

As of March 19, 9,500 visas have been issued under the Ukraine Family Scheme scheme out of a total of 30,300 submitted applications, according to the Government's website.

A Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office spokesperson said: "We have introduced the largest and most severe package of sanctions ever imposed on Russia or indeed any major economy. The UK has designated over 1,000 individuals and entities under the Russia sanctions regime since the invasion.

"We have cut off Russian banks with assets of £258 billion as well as the central bank in Moscow. Over three million Russian companies are now barred from raising money on UK capital markets."

**Load-Date:** March 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Priti Patel voices 'frustration' at time taken to process Ukraine visas*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:655V-RMG1-DY4H-K4SX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 8, 2022 Friday 11:03 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 404 words

**Byline:** Flora Thompson

**Highlight:** Around 12,000 people had arrived in the UK under Ukraine visa schemes as of Tuesday, according to Home Office figures.

**Body**

The [*Home Secretary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-secretary) has apologised "with frustration" over the time it is taking for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to arrive in the UK under visa schemes.

But [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) denied visa requirements and checks are slowing the process and causing delays, insisting the UK will "absolutely see changes in numbers" as work continues.

Around 12,000 people had arrived in the UK under [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) visa schemes as of Tuesday, according to [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) figures.

I apologise with frustration myself... it takes time to start up a new route

Home Secretary Priti Patel

Some 10,800 people had arrived under the Ukraine family scheme but only 1,200 had made it to the UK as part of the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme, provisional data published on the department's website shows.

As of Thursday, about 79,800 applications had been submitted to the schemes and 40,900 visas had been granted.

Of these, 43,600 applications were for the sponsorship scheme, with 12,500 visas issued.

Out of 36,300 requests made for family visas, 28,500 had been approved.

In a pre-recorded interview with the [*BBC*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bbc) , which aired on Friday, Ms Patel said: "I apologise with frustration myself... it takes time to start up a new route."

She said it is "always easy to blame someone else" but security checks "are not the problem" when it comes to the time it is taking for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to reach the UK.

As of March 31, around 4,700 visas had been issued under the sponsorship scheme out of 32,200 applications submitted, according to Home Office figures published last week.

At that time, 24,400 visas had been granted under the family scheme out of 32,800 applications received.

After being told by the BBC there is "huge frustration" among the public who are experiencing three to four week delays and are blaming red tape for being unable to put people up, Ms Patel replied: "They're not seeing delays.

"We are processing and, as I've said as well, I'm streamlining processes.

"I streamlined the family scheme in less than a week, and we simplified that and we changed the way certain checks are done.

"Also, I'm working to automate where we can."

Asked why Britain is playing "catch up" with other countries, Ms Patel said comparisons with EU members are not "like for like".

"We want to give people the status and security of coming to our country along with the warm welcome... We have to ensure that they are protected and safeguarded in the United Kingdom as well", she added.

**Load-Date:** April 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Michael Gove 'exploring' whether he can house Ukrainian refugee personally*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650B-0F91-JBNF-W165-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 13, 2022 Sunday 1:45 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:3

**Length:** 728 words

**Byline:** Adam Forrest

**Highlight:** Minister says he still has to work 'one or two details out'

**Body**

Cabinet minister [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) is interested in housing a [*refugee*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugee) from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , as he revealed he is "exploring" how to personally support those fleeing the Russian invasion.

The levelling up minister set out details of the new sponsorship route, allowing Britons to offer homes to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and receive a "thank you" payment of £350 per month.

Asked on the BBC's Sunday Morning programme he would take in a Ukrainian refugee, Mr Gove said: "Yes."

He added: "I'm exploring what I can do, I know that there are others who have. Without going into my personal circumstances, there are a couple of things I need to sort out -but yes."

Mr Gove also indicated during a Times Radio interview that he would be willing to house a refugee himself - saying he was interested in doing so and "exploring what I can do".

Grilled if he would house a refugee or was thinking about it, he replied: "I have particular personal circumstances which I won't bore you with, which just require me to work one or two details out."

Mr Gove said "tens of thousands" of refugees could come through the route, and revealed that local authorities would receive £10,000 for each Ukrainian refugee sponsored in their area.

People sponsoring refugees through the new uncapped route will be required to commit to the scheme for a minimum of six months - but will encouraged to keep up the offer for as long as they can.

Sponsored refugees will be granted 36 months leave to remain in the UK, with entitlement to benefits and public services. Those offering accommodation will be vetted and Ukrainian applicants will undergo security checks.

Opposition parties expressed concern about the "slow and cumbersome" offer, and whether local authorities would be given enough support.

Charities also questioned the "bureaucratic" process which will see British sponsors go through online paperwork and security checks on behalf of a particular "named" refugee.

The Refugee Council said the government was putting too many "bureaucratic hurdles" in the way - and said the scene "will inevitably be restricted to those who are known to people in the UK".

But Mr Gove said charities would help in the "matching process" - and said the government believed individuals and community groups would use social media to connect with refugees.

Mr Gove told Sky News' Sophy Ridge on Sunday: "We know charities, and we are working with them, who are working to identify people on the ground, and helping to identify people here to create the matching process."

Labour also cautioned that "too many questions remain unanswered" about the new scheme - accusing the government have been "far too slow, far too mean" in its approach to refugees.

Shadow levelling up minister Lisa Nandy said: "There's no help ... to make people match their sponsor. We're asking people to ask to take to social media at a time they're fleeing a war zone. This is a serious crisis - it's not online dating situation."

Questioning the lack of detail in the sponsorship plan, Sir Keir Starmer told Sky News: "What would comfort me more frankly is if I heard from Michael Gove that there were plans in place for the support that's actually going to be needed on arrival."

Meanwhile, first ministers Nicola Sturgeon and Mark Drakeford have said both Scotland and Wales are willing to become "super sponsors" for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

The SNP leader said on Sunday that Scotland "stands ready" to take 3,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** immediately.

Ms Sturgeon also said she was worried the UK sponsorship scheme will be "slow and cumbersome", will lack proper support and safeguarding, and may not be sustainable for the length of time that people may need to stay in the UK.

The Independent is also raising money for the people of Ukraine - if you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gofundme.com%2Frefugeeswelcome&data=04%7C01%7CKaty.Clifton%40independent.co.uk%7C2a2d4959602a48a7514408d9fbc3eb4d%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637817641167117856%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=%2FDXULZcjP0zOpL9jB%2FpDx3Z10K6NwyORJy68hlaIVYY%3D&reserved=0) for our GoFundMe page.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here.*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Ftopic%2Frefugees-welcome-0&data=04%7C01%7CKaty.Clifton%40independent.co.uk%7C2a2d4959602a48a7514408d9fbc3eb4d%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637817641167117856%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=RZ7crcxX9U9jftiU38S4VVIl8uiLT6BXiwvDblkPG%2Fo%3D&reserved=0)

**Load-Date:** March 13, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Michael Gove wrongly says 300,000 visas given to Ukrainians - before admitting only 3,000 issued*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6509-NCN1-DY4H-K36R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 13, 2022 Sunday 10:25 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:3

**Length:** 736 words

**Byline:** Adam Forrest

**Highlight:** Minister reveals councils will receive £10,000 for each Ukrainian sponsored under new scheme

**Body**

Cabinet minister [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) blundered over the number of ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) accepted by Britain - incorrectly claiming that 300,000 visas has been issued to those fleeing the Russian invasion.

Challenged over the figures on Sky News, Mr Gove admitted he had got the figured wrong, before revealing that only around 3,000 visas had been granted on the [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) family scheme.

The levelling up minister set out details of the new sponsorship route, allowing Britons to offer homes to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and receive a "thank you" payment of £350 per month.

Mr Gove said "tens of thousands" of refugees could come through the route, and revealed that local authorities would receive £10,000 for each Ukrainian refugee sponsored in their area.

The government has been criticised for insisting that British sponsors go through online paperwork and security checks on behalf of a particular, named refugee.

The Refugee Council accused the government of putting too many "bureaucratic hurdles" in the way - and said "it will inevitably be restricted to those who are known to people in the UK".

Mr Gove said charities would help in the "matching process", and said the government believed individuals and community groups would use social media to connect and fill out online paperwork together.

"The alternative to that would be the government attempting to match people in Ukraine to individuals here - that could be quite a slow, bureaucratic process," he told Sophie Ridge on Sunday.

Mr Gove added: "We know charities, and we are working with them, who are working to identify people on the ground, and helping to identify people here to create the matching process."

Asked if he would personally use to scheme to offer a room to a Ukrainian refugee, Mr Gove said he is in the process of "seeking to see what I can do".

The Homes for Ukraine scheme will allow individuals, charities, community groups and businesses to bring people fleeing the war to safety, even if they have no ties to the UK.

Sponsored refugees will be granted 36 months leave to remain in the UK, with entitlement to benefits and public services. Sponsors will be expected to guarantee a minimum stay of six months.

But a lot of questions remain unanswered. The government appears to be expect refugees and sponsors to find each other online, or through family and friendship networks, before making an application on the website launched on Monday.

Britons offering accommodation will be vetted and the Ukrainian applicants will also have to undergo security checks.

Mr Gove said Britons could register their interest on a new website from Monday, and claimed "matching" would start taking place from Friday. "I would expected that in a week's time we will see the first people arriving under this scheme," he said.

Enver Solomon, chief executive of the Refugee Council, said: "By establishing a visa route and naming scheme, it will inevitably be restricted to those who are known to people in the UK", adding that it would be a "lengthy" application process.

Labour also cautioned that "too many questions remain unanswered" about the new scheme.

Shadow levelling-up secretary Lisa Nandy said that if Britons were required to have a prior connection to a Ukrainian family to sponsor them, that would be a "severe limitation".

Ms Nandy said it was still unclear what support would be offered to vulnerable children and older people, whether provision would made for unaccompanied children, and what help would go to local government and housing providers.

Mr Gove also appeared to suggested the government would consider a third route to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, akin to the humanitarian resettlement scheme set up to welcome Syrians from refugee camps.

The minister told Sky News the UK could continue to send humanitarian to countries on the Ukrainian border. "Alongside that we can then see how many people how many we can take to the UK ... there are of course many others we can support and whom we can provide a warm welcome."

Former immigration minister Caroline Nokes said security checks must be carried out at an "impressive speed" on the "brilliant people" wishing to offer homes to refugees under the government's new sponsorship scheme.

She added: "It is imperative that all these brilliant people who are contacting me and contacting charities offering up their homes, they do need to be checked. That's a sad, stark reality. But that has to happen quickly."

**Load-Date:** March 13, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Germany considering short-term migration border controls with Poland and the Czech Republic*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:697B-PS21-DY4H-K1SM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

September 22, 2023 Friday 6:57 PM GMT

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**Length:** 294 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** A government official says that Germany is considering establishing short-term border controls with Poland and the Czech Republic to keep irregular migrants from entering the country

**Body**

[*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) is considering establishing short-term border controls with [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) and the Czech Republic to keep irregular migrants from entering the country, a government official said Friday.

Interior Minister Nancy Faeser told German newspaper Welt am Sonntag that setting up temporary police checks on border crossings would help Germany prevent the smuggling and trafficking of people.

She added that the increased border checks would need to be combined with the already ongoing random police checks that are being carried out.

Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic belong to the European Union's visa-free zone, commonly known as the Schengen Area.

“Respective additional border police measures are currently being reviewed,” a German [*Interior Ministry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/interior-ministry) spokesperson told the German news agency dpa.

Faeser is also discussing with the Czech Republic the possibility of German police officers operating on Czech territory, similar to an agreement that Germany has struck with Switzerland.

“In close coordination with [*Swiss*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/swiss) police forces, German police officers are allowed to inspect on Swiss territory and to prevent unauthorized entry (into Germany)," the minister said.

Faeser also demanded closer cooperation on migration between the EU and Turkey, and said that the current EU-Turkey deal required an “update.”

The number of people who migrated to Germany in 2022 was higher than in any other year, according to the German federal statistics agency Destatis, with about 2.67 million people having entered the country in 2022.

Included in the number are 1.1 million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who sought safety in Germany after Russian launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

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Follow AP’s coverage of migration issues at [*https://apnews.com/hub/migration*](https://apnews.com/hub/migration)

**Load-Date:** September 22, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Zelensky praises Mila Kunis and Ashton Kutcher for 35m dollar Ukraine appeal*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651W-8GC1-JBNF-W4TF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 20, 2022 Sunday 10:35 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 428 words

**Byline:** Alex Green

**Highlight:** The Ukrainian president spoke with the couple via a video call.

**Body**

Ukrainian president [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) has praised [*Mila Kunis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mila-kunis) and [*Ashton Kutcher*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ashton-kutcher) for "inspiring the world" after they raised nearly 35 million US dollars for the country.

The Hollywood power couple spoke with Mr Zelensky following their efforts to secure public donations to help supply humanitarian aid to those caught up in the conflict.

On Sunday, Mr Zelensky shared a photo on Twitter taken during a video call with the duo.

.[*@aplusk*](https://twitter.com/aplusk?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) & Mila Kunis were among the first to respond to our grief. They have already raised $35 million & are sending it to [*@flexport*](https://twitter.com/flexport?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) & [*@Airbnb*](https://twitter.com/Airbnb?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) to help refugees. Grateful for their support. Impressed by their determination. They inspire the world. [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/paa0TjJseu*](https://t.co/paa0TjJseu) - (@ZelenskyyUa) [*March 20, 2022*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1505643511928037379?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) He wrote: "@aplusk & Mila Kunis were among the first to respond to our grief. They have already raised 35 million US dollars & are sending it to @flexport & @[*Airbnb*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/airbnb) to help (***Ukrainian***) ***refugees***."Grateful for their support. Impressed by their determination. They inspire the world."He added the hashtag #[*StandWithUkraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine). Earlier this month, the couple committed to matching donations made to rental company Airbnb and freight transporter Flexport for up to three million dollars (£2,276,000), with the aim of raising 30 million dollars (£22,764,000).They reached their target on Thursday with the total continuing the grow.We are overwhelmed with gratitude for your support. 2 weeks ago, we asked you to join us and more than 65,000 of you stepped up and donated what you could. Now, with your help we have reached our $30 million goal. (1/5) [*pic.twitter.com/zQfQ1BNWZm*](https://t.co/zQfQ1BNWZm) - ashton kutcher (@aplusk) [*March 17, 2022*](https://twitter.com/aplusk/status/1504508504677109794?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Launching the appeal, Kunis, who was born in Chernivtsi, Ukraine, described herself as a "proud Ukrainian" whose family arrived in the US in 1991.

She wrote: "Ukrainians are proud and brave people who deserve our help in their time of need.

"This unjust attack on Ukraine and humanity at large is devastating and the Ukrainian people need our support."

The couple, who married in 2015 and share two children, have since promised to do "everything we can" to ensure that the money "finds maximum impact with those in need".

Fellow celebrity couple Ryan Reynolds and Blake Lively also previously pledged to match donations up to 1,000,000 dollars (£750,000) to support the growing number of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

The pair urged people to donate to humanitarian charity US For UNHCR to help the thousands of citizens displaced by the conflict, and said they would double the support shown.

**Load-Date:** March 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Zelenskyy to co-host summit in Albania seeking more war support from southeastern Europe*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BF5-S6J1-DY4H-K04P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 28, 2024 Wednesday 5:16 AM GMT

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**Length:** 407 words

**Byline:** Llazar Semini

**Highlight:** Ukraine’s president will co-host a summit with Albania’s government on Wednesday that’s meant to encourage further support for Kyiv by southeastern European countries as signs of fatigue grow two years after Russia’s invasion

**Body**

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) 's president will co-host a summit with Albania's government on Wednesday that's meant to encourage further support for Kyiv by southeastern European countries as signs of fatigue grow two years after [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's full-scale invasion.

It is not immediately clear what the summit is expected to achieve beyond its stated goals of "peace, security, cooperation." No agenda was available ahead of the summit. Officials with NATO member Albania gave no details.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will attend in person on the latest stop in an international tour that saw him in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday to push for a peace plan and the return of prisoners of war from Russia.

Securing further support is key to Ukraine’s leader while his country faces battlefield challenges. Zelenskyy on Sunday announced that 31,000 Ukrainian soldiers have been killed in action since Russia's invasion — the first time that Kyiv had confirmed the number of its losses.

Ukraine has urged Western leaders to increase the joint production of weapons and ammunition, improve Ukrainian air defenses and put new pressure on Russia via expanded sanctions. The head of NATO has said the U.S.-led military alliance has no plans to send troops to Ukraine, and Germany, Poland and other countries this week have said the same.

Thirteen countries from southeastern Europe, including some of Ukraine's neighbors, are expected to attend the Albania summit, along with officials from the European Union and other international institutions.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Albania earlier this month.

But not all the countries are in full support for Ukraine in its war against Russia. Kremlin ally [*Serbia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/serbia) is the only European country that has refused to align with EU sanctions following Russia’s invasion. It continues signing cooperation agreements with Moscow.

Albania, a NATO member since 2009 and a candidate for EU membership, has voiced its full support for Kyiv against Russia’s invasion. It has provided military assistance in the form of ammunition and training of Ukrainian military. It was among the first countries offering shelter to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. It has joined international sanctions against Russian officials and institutions.

As a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council in the last two years, Albania joined the U.S. in initiating resolutions against Russia's invasion.

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Follow Llazar Semini at [*https://x.com/lsemini*](https://x.com/lsemini)

**Load-Date:** February 28, 2024

**End of Document**



[*More than 6,000 people in NI sign up to Homes for Ukraine scheme*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6517-CS11-JBNF-W160-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 17, 2022 Thursday 10:56 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 419 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** Brandon Lewis confirmed that 6,262 people in Northern Ireland have signed up for the scheme.

**Body**

More than 6,000 people in Northern Ireland have registered their interest in taking in ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

On Thursday, the [*Secretary of State*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/secretary-state) for Northern Ireland confirmed that 6,262 people in Northern Ireland had signed up for the UK Government's [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) programme, which allows individuals, charities, community groups and businesses to bring people escaping the war to safety - even if they have no ties to the UK.

Anyone with a room or home available for at least six months can offer it to a Ukrainian individual or a family, though those offering to host will be vetted and Ukrainian applicants will undergo security checks.

Brandon Lewis tweeted: "Northern Ireland is known for its hospitality the world over.

"I'm proud of the generosity shown towards those fleeing the awful situation in Ukraine.

"6,262 people in NI have already expressed interest to provide support with #HomesForUkraine."

Northern Ireland is known for its hospitality the world over. I'm proud of the generosity shown towards those fleeing the awful situation in Ukraine. 6,262 people in NI have already expressed interest to provide support with [*#HomesForUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/HomesForUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). Thank you. [*https://t.co/qm3vhlNxoF*](https://t.co/qm3vhlNxoF) [*pic.twitter.com/Uspu9fGTmW*](https://t.co/Uspu9fGTmW) - Brandon Lewis (@BrandonLewis) [*March 17, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BrandonLewis/status/1504544087357239296?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

The scheme will have two phases. The first - launching on Friday - will allow UK sponsors to nominate a named Ukrainian or family to stay with them in their home or in a separate property.

The [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) is working with a number of charities and [*NGOs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ngos) to work out the best way to match people who are not yet connected with Ukrainians.

There is no limit to how many people can apply.

The scheme has already proved controversial, with community groups and charities raising concerns.

Robina Qureshi, director of Positive Action in Housing, has accused the Government of "unleashing chaos" through the scheme and warned that refugees could die before they are matched with a sponsor.

The charity runs Room for Refugees, the UK's longest-running refugee hosting programme which has been in place since 2002.

Ms Qureshi said it is giving the "illusion of people helping because they're distracting from the fact that they haven't lifted visa restrictions".

Across the border from Northern Ireland, the Irish Government has waived any need for a visa for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to enter the country.

Around 7,000 refugees have arrived in the Republic of Ireland and have been provided with PPS numbers to allow them to work and access social welfare.

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*MPs vow to keep housing refugees under Homes For Ukraine scheme*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:667N-C1M1-JBNF-W15R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 26, 2022 Friday 2:45 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 435 words

**Byline:** Lucas Cumiskey

**Highlight:** Victoria Prentis and Duncan Baker say they will continue to host refugees from Ukraine beyond the half-year minimum required.

**Body**

Two Tory [*MPs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mps) say they will continue to accommodate ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** beyond the minimum six-month period expected of hosts under the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) (HfU) scheme.

In March, the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) launched HfU so people could sponsor refugees fleeing the war-torn country by offering a spare room or home for at least six months.

As Wednesday marked Ukraine’s independence day and six months since Russia invaded, two Tory MPs pledged to continue hosting beyond the half-year minimum.

North Oxfordshire MP Victoria Prentis, an environment minister, started hosting a Ukrainian refugee, Vika, then 25, in March.

She told PA news agency: “I will continue to host Vika under ‘Homes for Ukraine’ for as long as she needs the help and support.

Sviatik is at the local school with my children and Anna the mother is teaching at the school where I helped get her a job. We are committed to helping them until it is safe to return home

Duncan Baker MP

“I would also like to say that I feel host families are doing an amazing job and I’m sure will continue to host where they can.

“They should be thanked enormously for what they have done, if they feel six months is enough.”

North Norfolk MP Duncan Baker has also agreed to continue hosting under HfU, after he opened his home to a mother, 35, and her six-year-old son in April.

He told PA: “Yes, we are continuing to look after our refugees.

“Sviatik is at the local school with my children and Anna the mother is teaching at the school where I helped get her a job.

“We are committed to helping them until it is safe to return home.

“We expect this will be for another year and are taking steps to do this so they have greater independence as they settle into North Norfolk.”

Transport Secretary [*Grant Shapps*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/grant-shapps) also took in a family of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in April.

After unveiling an infrastructure deal to help rebuild Ukraine on Thursday, he said: “They’ve been with us for more than four months now, I think, so they’ve lived with us for a long time.”

He added: “Seeing how they’re settling in, the child’s gone to school and learning English, and all of those different things – you know, of course, makes it very real.

“I think the whole country, the whole of our country, has found something in common with what’s happened in Ukraine.”

Refugees minister Richard Harrington this week said about 25,000 offers of accommodation from hosts under HfU have been taken up so far, with an average of three Ukrainians living in each home.

He has been lobbying the Treasury “very hard” to double the £350-a-month “thank you” payment for sponsors who house refugees for longer than half a year.

**Load-Date:** August 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UK issues 300 visas under Ukraine Family Scheme after Home Office receives almost 9,000 applications*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y3-NWC1-DY4H-K4BR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 10:14 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:3

**Length:** 409 words

**Byline:** Lamiat Sabin

**Highlight:** Ukrainians who reach France must go to Paris for UK visa appointments - with only 100 available

**Body**

The UK Home Office has granted 300 [*visas*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/visas) after receiving thousands of applications for its [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) Family Scheme.

While the United Nations has estimated that more than 1.7 million Ukrainians have fled the war to neighbouring countries, the Home Office's scheme is only open to people who have relatives in Britain.

Some 17,700 applications to date have been started by people desperate to leave Ukraine as Russia continues to inflict destruction and bloodshed after it launched its invasion more than a week ago.

Out of the 17,700 applications, 8,900 have been sent to the Home Office, the department announced, of which 4,300 appointments were made at visa application centres in countries including Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Czech Republic.

Out of 640 confirmed applications, just 300 visas were granted in the space of three days since the scheme opened on 4 March.

The Home Office insisted that it is making effort to ramp up the number of visas issued, and that the visas will allow refugees "the right to work and free access to healthcare, education and housing".

It said: "We have surged staff and increased the number of appointments at our visa application centres in Rzeszow, Warsaw, Bucharest, Budapest, Chisinau and Prague to process visa applications as quickly as possible."

Hundreds of Ukrainians have reached France and, for those with plans to travel to the UK, only 100 visa appointments have been reserved for the Paris application centre.

Those already at the ports in northern France would have to travel to Paris to give their fingerprints and other data, as they have been told that no visa appointments would be made in Calais.

The UK currently only has two schemes for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, with the other scheme requiring an applicant to have a designated UK sponsor.

Home Secretary Priti Patel told The Sun she was examining the "legal options" to grant humanitarian access to people "without ties to the UK".

But Boris Johnson did not confirm when asked on Monday whether a new route would be set up.

He said that refugees will be treated with a "very generous and open approach", adding that it was "sensible" to "have some basic ability to check who is coming in and who isn't".

Foreign office minister James Cleverly said ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** preferred to stay in countries close to Ukraine, such as Poland where more than a million Ukrainians have sought refuge, and that the UK was providing humanitarian support to those countries.

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'Generous' Scots praised for support shown to displaced Ukrainians*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65KT-3N51-DY4H-K4C5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 3, 2022 Friday 10:38 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 438 words

**Byline:** Hannah Carmichael

**Highlight:** A total of 3,747 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** heading to Scottish sponsors have arrived in the UK since Russia invaded on February 24.

**Body**

Scotland's efforts in providing support to displaced Ukrainians have been praised by a [*Holyrood*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/holyrood) minister as the milestone of 100 days since the start of the war was marked on Friday.

A total of 3,747 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** heading to [*Scottish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scottish) sponsors have arrived in the UK since [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) invaded on February 24.

Almost 10,901 visas have been issued for a sponsor in Scotland through the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme, the [*Scottish Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scottish-government) revealed.

Of these, more than 7,642 visas have been supplied through the Scottish Government's Super Sponsor Scheme, while a further 3,259 visas were issued for matches with an individual sponsor.

We stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine

Neil Gray

Neil Gray, the minister with special responsibility for refugees from Ukraine, thanked those who have "generously opened their doors" to families fleeing the war, adding that Scotland will continue to stand in solidarity with those affected.

Mr Gray said: "The horrors that have befallen the people of Ukraine since their country was invaded by Russia 100 days ago has shocked everyone in Scotland and around the world, and we stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

"As a nation, Scotland has responded and opened its heart and extended the hand of friendship offering support and services for thousands of displaced Ukrainians.

"I would like to thank the thousands of people who have generously opened their doors to Ukrainian families, volunteered and donated to causes."

[*People*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/people) arriving in Scotland have been provided with support such as meals, accommodation, clothing, healthcare, trauma support and translation, as well as access to free healthcare and social security benefits.

A national matching service has also been established in order to identify longer-term accommodation across the country, including offers from hosts, local authorities and housing associations.

Mr Gray added: "I would also like to thank Scotland's local authorities and third sector organisations which have risen to the challenge we faced to mobilise a major effort in co-ordinating help, providing support and services, and to the private sector which has also offered assistance, in such a short space of time.

"Whilst we want peace and for people to be able to return to Ukraine when it is safe and when they wish to do so, Ukrainians who have settled here can be assured Scotland will be their home for as long as they want it, and they will be made welcome and treated with care, dignity and respect.

"The Scottish Government and our partners are here to provide support for as long as it takes and we are sure the people of Scotland feel the same."

**Load-Date:** June 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Still 'major gaps' in Ukraine visa scheme despite U-turn*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YV-H211-JCS0-D31D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 11, 2022 Friday

Second Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 3

**Length:** 1095 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

Priti Patel's changes to Britain's scheme for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** do not go "anywhere near far enough" to give proper support to those fleeing conflict, the government has been warned. In a move to simplify the system, the home secretary announced that, from Tuesday, those who have fled the Russian invasion and hold passports will no longer need to go to a visa application centre to submit their fingerprints and documents before they come to the UK.

But experts have said there are "still major gaps" in the government's support for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, warning that people would still be required to go through a "chaotic and frustrating" online application process and called for "urgent clarity" on who will benefit in practice. Lawyers said many Ukrainians do not currently have passports and are still likely to seek out visa application centres for help with the "confusing" process of filling out applications.

The Independent's Refugees Welcome campaign is calling for the government to go further and faster to help Ukrainians fleeing the war, with more than 183,000 people signing our petition asking ministers to provide more supplies of food, clothing and shelter for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and to do more to make the UK a safe haven for them.

Announcing the change in the House of Commons yesterday, the home secretary said it would mean visa application centres across Europe could "focus their efforts on helping Ukrainians without passports". It is not clear how many Ukrainians do not have passports. In the five years to 2021, 16.6 million Ukrainians were issued an international passport, of a population of 44 million.

The announcement came over mounting concerns about "unnecessary delays and bureaucracy" in the visa application process for the UK's family visa scheme, which was opened last Friday. Many refugees have been forced towait for hours in the coldand travel for miles in order to complete the requirement of submitting their biometric information.

Changes to the UK's scheme were followed by reports that the British public will be asked to offer homes to tens of thousands of Ukrainians fleeing war.

According to the Daily Telegraph, ministers will this weekend launch a hotline and webpage allowing individuals, charities, businesses and community groups to offer rooms to refugees who have no family links to the UK.

The shadow home secretary, Yvette Cooper, said the changes to the scheme would be a "relief for many", but that they "don't yet go far enough".

"There will still be problems at visa centres and many people [are] still excluded from help. The chaotic government response puts us to shame," she said.

Kerry Garcia, head of immigration at law firm Stevens & Bolton, who is supporting eight Ukrainians with UK visa applications on a pro bono basis, told The Independent that while the change was "helpful", it did not remove the requirement for people who have fled conflict to go through a "confusing and frustrating" online application system in order to apply.

"People still need to access an online system that doesn't work very well at the best of times. It is not fit for purpose for this many applications being submitted at the same time. It crashes, you can't upload documents," she said. "There are all sorts of practical difficulties. This is a system designed for normal system of immigration, not for a refugee crisis."

Ms Garcia, whose Ukrainian clients have all now submitted their online applications but have not yet had their visa appointments because there are often none available for weeks, said ministers must also "clarify urgently" how the change would affect people in practice.

"In particular they must clarify how it affects people who have already applied, how the system will work in terms of processing documents, and also anticipated processing times. It's one thing to say you can now apply digitally, but the big question is how long do you have to wait in your Airbnb using up in some cases your life savings?" she said.

Amy Stokes, head of business immigration at Forbes Solicitors, said digital visas would do little to avoid the need for Ukrainians to make their applications in person at visa application centres. "Applying digitally sounds great in theory but will do little to stem the confusion about whether a person meets the visa eligibility criteria," she said.

Ukraine's ambassador to the UK Vadym Prystaiko told MPs on Wednesday that if bureaucratic procedures in the visa scheme were "simplified" it would "definitely resolve all the issues".

Marley Morris, associate director for migration, trade and communities at the Institute for Public Policy Research, said there were "still major gaps" in the UK's support for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. "The government should follow the lead of Canada and the EU by offering temporary protection to all Ukrainians who want to apply. At the same time, it should urgently investigate how to further streamline the visa process, or simply lift visa requirements altogether," he added.

Madeleine Sumption, director of the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford, said: "It was clear from government data that securing in-person appointments was one of the obstacles preventing eligible Ukrainians from getting a visa to come to the UK.

"However, it was only one of the factors - and there are still other bottlenecks, including the need to gather all the documents and information required to prove eligibility. The next big question is how quickly the Home Office will be able to ramp-up processing as the applications increase."

Boris Johnson insisted the visa scheme was as "light touch" as possible but stressed the need for security checks on people fleeing Ukraine. He told reporters yesterday: "I think people do understand that when you have got large numbers of people leaving from a war zone - some of them still armed, perhaps not all of their identities completely clear, their motivations completely clear - it is responsible to have checks."

"More than a thousand" visas had been granted by Wednesday and the numbers were going to "climb very steeply", Mr Johnson said.

But Andy Hewett, head of advocacy at the Refugee Council, said the change to the visa scheme did not go "anywhere near far enough". He added: "Rather than continuing with a system thatrequiresUkrainian refugees to apply for a visa, the government urgently needs to temporarily waive visa requirements so that all Ukrainian families fleeing war and bloodshed can easily reach the UK and access the protection that is their fundamental rightunder the Refugee Convention."

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'Pre-bunking' shows promise in fight against misinformation*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:667B-C901-DY4H-K1G7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 24, 2022 Wednesday 8:20 PM GMT

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**Length:** 907 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Google and a team of university researchers have hit on what they say could be an effective way to make people more impervious to the harmful impact of online misinformation

**Body**

Soon after the Russian invasion, the hoaxes began. ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** were taking jobs, committing crimes and abusing handouts. The misinformation spread rapidly online throughout [*Eastern Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/eastern-europe) , sometimes pushed by [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) in an effort to destabilize its neighbors.

It's the kind of swift spread of falsehood that has been blamed in manycountries for increased polarization and an erosion of trust in democratic institutions, journalism and science.

But countering or stopping misinformation has proven elusive.

New findings from university researchers and [*Google*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/google) , however, reveal that one of the most promising responses to misinformation may also be one of the simplest.

In a paper published Wednesday in the journal Science Advances, the researchers detail how short online videos that teach basic critical thinking skills can make people better able to resist misinformation.

The researchers created a series of videos similar to a public service announcement that focused on specific misinformation techniques — characteristics seen in many common false claims that include emotionally charged language, personal attacks or false comparisons between two unrelated items.

Researchers then gave people a series of claims and found that those who watched the videos were significantly better at distinguishing false information from accurate information.

It's an approach called “pre-bunking” and it builds on years of research into an idea known as inoculation theory that suggests exposing people to how misinformation works, using harmless, fictional examples, can boost their defenses to false claims.

With the findings in hand, Google plans to roll out a series of pre-bunking videos soon in Eastern Europe focused on scapegoating, which can be seen in much of the misinformation about ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. That focus was chosen by [*Jigsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jigsaw) , a division of Google that works to find new ways to address misinformation and extremism.

“We have spent quite a bit of time and energy studying the problem,” said Beth Goldberg, Jigsaw's head of research and one of the authors of the paper. “We started thinking: How can we make the users, the people online, more resilient to misinformation?"

The two-minute clips then demonstrate how these tactics can show up in headlines, or social media posts, to make a person believe something that isn't true.

They're surprisingly effective. Subjects who viewed the videos were found to be significantly better at distinguishing false claims from accurate information when tested by the researchers. The same positive results occurred when the experiment was replicated on [*YouTube*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/youtube) , where nearly 1 million people viewed the videos.

Researchers are now investigating how long the effects last, and whether “booster” videos can help sustain the benefits.

Earlier findings have suggested that online games or tutorials that teach critical thinking skills can also improve resiliency to misinformation. But videos, which could be played alongside online advertisements, are likely to reach many more people, said Jon Roozenbeek, a Cambridge University professor and one of the authors of the study.

Other authors included researchers at the University of Bristol in the U.K. and the University of Western Australia.

Google's effort will be one of the largest real-world tests of pre-bunking so far. The videos will be released on YouTube, Facebook and TikTok, in Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. All three countries have accepted large numbers of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and their citizens could be vulnerable to misinformation about refugees.

Jigsaw CEO Yasmin Green said the work on prebunking is intended to complement Google’s other efforts to reduce the spread of misinformation: “As the scourge of misinformation grows, there’s a lot more we can do to provide people with prompts and features that help them stay safe and informed online.”

While journalistic fact checks can be effective in debunking a particular piece of misinformation, they're time and labor intensive. By focusing on characteristics of misinformation in general instead of specific claims, pre-bunking videos can help a person spot false claims on a wider variety of topics.

Another method, content moderation by social media companies, can often be inconsistent. While platforms like Facebook and Twitter often remove misinformation that violates their rules, they're also criticized for failing to do more. Other platforms like Telegram or Gab boast a largely hands-off approach to misinformation.

Social media content moderation and journalistic fact checks can also run the risk of alienating those who believe the misinformation. They might also be ignored by people who already distrust legitimate news outlets.

“The word fact checking itself has become politicized,” Roozenbeek said.

Pre-bunking videos, however, don't target specific claims, and they make no assertions about what is true or not. Instead, they teach the viewer how false claims work in general — whether it's a claim about elections or NASA's moon landings, or the latest outbreak of the avian flu.

That transferability makes pre-bunking a particularly effective way of confronting misinformation, according to John Cook, a research professor at Australia's Monash University who has created online games that teach ways to spot misinformation.

“We've done enough research to know this can be effective," Cook said. “What we need now is the resources to deploy this at scale.”

**Load-Date:** August 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Pelosi holds talks on Ukraine with Polish president following meeting with Zelensky in Kyiv*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65C0-W2B1-DY4H-K3FW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 2, 2022 Monday 3:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 485 words

**Byline:** Gustaf Kilander

**Highlight:** Speaker says US lawmakers 'reaffirmed our nation's pledge to continue supporting Poland's humanitarian efforts'

**Body**

A group of [*US*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/us) congressional representatives, led by House Speaker [*Nancy Pelosi*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nancy-pelosi) , visited [*Warsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warsaw) , [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) to hold talks on [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Meeting with President [*Andrzej Duda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/andrzej-duda) and Polish lawmakers on Monday, the US delegation shared their gratitude for the [*humanitarian support the country has provided to* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-nuclear-war-mariupol-latest-b2069613.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine%20news%20-live:%20Mariupol%20steelworks%20shelling%20resumes%20as%20doctors%20describe%20dire%20bunker%20conditions) as well as other kinds of aid to the war-torn nation.

Ms Pelosi was joined by six other US lawmakers on the trip to Poland, which comes after the group visited the Ukrainian capital [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) and met with President [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) , during which they pledged American support for Ukraine until the end of the war with [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , which invaded on 24 February.

Ms Pelosi said in a statement that Mr Duda is "a valued partner in supporting the people of Ukraine in the face of Putin's brutal and unprovoked war".

She added that the US delegation "expressed America's deep gratitude to the Polish government and Polish people for opening their hearts and homes to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, and we reaffirmed our nation's pledge to continue supporting Poland's humanitarian efforts".

More than 5.5 million people have fled Ukraine since Russia's invasion, with most of them, more than three million, arriving in Poland, and many have remained in the country.

Polish citizens have welcomed Ukrainians into their homes, while the government and volunteers have set up other ways to help war refugees.

The congressional trip came two days after President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) requested that Congress approve a $33bn aid package to Ukraine, including both military and humanitarian assistance. The package is more than twice the size of the initial $13.6bn sent so far, almost all of which have now been used.

The package is intended to show Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) that the US will support Ukraine for the long haul and that American military aid for Ukraine isn't fleeting.

During a press conference on Sunday in Rzeszow, Poland, the US lawmakers lauded Ukraine's defence efforts and framed the war as a fight between good and evil and assured that US military, humanitarian and economic support would be present long-term.

The Associated Press contributed to this report

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** May 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UK’s Rwanda scheme ‘wrong’ and may put pressure on Ireland – Martin*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65XJ-8PD1-JBNF-W3XY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 14, 2022 Thursday 12:53 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 496 words

**Byline:** Grinne N. Aodha

**Highlight:** The Taoiseach made the comments after it emerged that Ireland had a ‘severe shortage’ of accommodation for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

**Body**

Irish premier Micheal Martin has said the UK Government’s [*Rwanda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rwanda) scheme may have resulted in an increase in international protection applicants in the Republic.

The [*Taoiseach*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/taoiseach) made the comments after it emerged on Wednesday night that [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) had a “severe shortage” of state accommodation for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Speaking from Government Buildings on Thursday, Mr Martin said that of those at the reception centre for Ukrainians at Citywest in [*Dublin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dublin) , 70% are now international protection applicants.

“We will be analysing this, but something has happened in the last two to three months in terms of the surge within international protection applicants, something has clearly happened,” the Taoiseach said.

“Anecdotally or intuitively, one can see, and maybe sense that that policy announcement, which I thought was a wrong policy announcement by the UK, a shocking sort of initiative in my view, to be doing some agreement with Rwanda, clearly may have motivated people utilising the Common Travel Area to come into the Republic – yes, I think it is one of a number of factors.”

The Taoiseach made the comments as he and the Minister for [*Housing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/housing) , Darragh O’Brien, announced a progress update on the Housing for All plan.

Mr O’Brien said “real progress” had been made, “despite significant headwinds”.

“Commencements are up, permissions are up, completions are up, and thankfully people are now drawing down more mortgages than they have in over a decade. First-time buyers are at their highest level since 2007.”Speaking after announcement of a 50 million euro Croi Conaithe (Towns) Fund, which aims to bring vacant and underused buildings in towns and villages back into use, Mr O’Brien said of the Croi Conaithe (Cities) Scheme:

“It’s a targeted support that goes to homeowners by reducing the purchasing price of an apartment. It will directly ensure that over 5000 new apartments will be built for owner-occupiers.

“I’m very glad to say, as the Taoiseach alluded to, that there has been substantial interest from the sector in this scheme, and it has the potential to bring fresh life into our cities over the coming years.”

It comes as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has called on the Irish government to “urgently” provide emergency accommodation for refugees.

Enda O’Neill, Head of Office with UNHCR Ireland, said the Government needed to make “significant” investment.

“The Government is to be commended for its efforts to date in providing accommodation to the tens of thousands who have arrived in Ireland this year fleeing war and persecution,” he said.

“However, it is becoming increasingly clear that the current approach of contracting accommodation from the private sector has reached its limits.

“Significant investment is now required by the Government to ensure that it has the capacity to meet the immediate need for shelter of new arrivals and to provide safeguards for the protection of children and other categories of vulnerable people.”

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainians granted sanctuary in Britain sent to live with suspected gangsters*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BSV-DJM1-JBNF-W28Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 13, 2024 Saturday 5:03 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 1179 words

**Byline:** Holly Bancroft

**Highlight:** Exclusive: Labour calls for investigation after The Independent reveals hosts’ links to serious and organised crime

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the horrors of war to find sanctuary in British homes were sent to live with suspected gangsters under the government’s [*flagship Homes for Ukraine scheme*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-visa-home-office-hotels-b2256853.html) , The Independent can reveal.

[*People with suspected links to serious or organised crime*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/homes-for-ukraine-fake-sponsors-exploitation-b2257507.html) were among those approved as hosts under the scheme, which was set up in 2022 to encourage warm-hearted homeowners to lend a spare room to those fleeing Vladimir Putin’s invasion.

In the worst cases, [*Ukrainian families and individuals*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/homes-ukraine-refugees-host-anniversary-b2307668.html) “just disappeared”, according to one council worker, while others were forced to work for their hosts or were charged rent. In one stark example, a couple with a young child were sent to live with a convicted paedophile.

Labour MP Alex Davies-Jones, the shadow safeguarding minister, said the shock findings, uncovered by this publication, raise serious concerns about the safeguarding and the screening of hosts, as she called for a “full and proper investigation”.

Eleanor Lyons, the independent anti-slavery commissioner, described the reports as concerning. She added: “We know traffickers often target vulnerable people, so we must do all we can to support displaced Ukrainians and prevent them from becoming vulnerable to exploitation.”

The Independent can also report that:

Maris Stratulis, England national director at the British Association of Social Workers, said her organisation had raised [*concerns about the scheme*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/kyiv-homes-uk-government-london-cornwall-b2496676.html) since the beginning.

“For some individuals and families, this scheme has literally been a lifeline and a safe and positive experience,” she said. “For others, fleeing to ‘perceived’ safety has not been a reality – their human rights and needs have not been protected.”

She added that poor coordination between the government and local councils “has created opportunities for children and adults to be lost in a system and vulnerable to abuse and exploitation”.

According to the figures, which The Independent obtained through a freedom of information request, at least 93 serious safeguarding alerts were raised across the UK over sponsors who put themselves forward for the scheme. Eight of these were about the links potential hosts had to serious or organised crime.

A further 374 warnings, known as “adverse hits”, were sent by the government to councils about Homes for Ukraine sponsors, the data shows. These hits occur when the host has failed Home Office checks.

In the London borough of Croydon, the council received alerts from the [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) about two separate sponsors’ connections to serious and organised crime. The council said these sponsor arrangements were swiftly “discontinued” after the alert was received.

Suffolk County Council received a similar alert. The Ukrainian guests were offered an immediate transfer to another home, but they turned this offer down and later found alternative accommodation with friends.

Another alert over a sponsor’s connection to organised crime was received by Nottinghamshire County Council, resulting in a “subsequent guest change of accommodation”.

Sheffield City Council dealt with three serious safeguarding alerts: one sponsor with links to serious and organised crime, one sponsor who had accommodation requests linked to multiple commercial properties, and one case in which the sponsor was abroad and offered to pay for a Ukrainian to live in a hotel room.

In the case of the crime-linked host, the Ukrainian guests arrived in the UK but their whereabouts were unknown. The council had to raise a missing persons report with the police, who located them in private rented accommodation in another city.

In a case publicised in Northern Ireland, a couple with a young child went to live with a convicted paedophile for a number of weeks before he was deemed unsuitable to be a sponsor. A criminal record check by the Home Office had reportedly not flagged his conviction, and the family had moved into a mobile home on the man’s property before further checks had been completed.

The social workers’ report, compiled by researchers from University College London and the organisation Focus on Labour Exploitation, found there were strong concerns over the UK’s Ukraine schemes. One local authority worker told researchers that a host involved in Homes for Ukraine had been found to have a trafficking conviction.

Another worker in the east of England said: “We had a number of families and individuals just disappear. Once in the UK they just disappeared, and we had no way of knowing if they were safe or in circumstances which placed them at risk – for example, around labour exploitation, criminal exploitation.”

Another interviewee said they had seen cases where hosts had “agreed to host young, attractive, female Ukrainians for the purposes of exploiting them”. They added: “We’ve heard cases where entire families have been hosted and the host has been making efforts to isolate the young female from the rest of the family.”

Councillors also said they had come across cases where refugees had been forced to work for their hosts. These cases included farmers in Northern Ireland reportedly using the scheme to get people to the UK to work for them, and then also charging them rent.

Speaking about the blurred line around labour exploitation, one council worker in the East Midlands explained: “The sponsors are saying: ‘Oh, here’s the car, could you go and pick my children up?’ or ‘I won’t be back till 9pm, could you babysit the children in the evening?’ The Ukrainians feel that they’re compelled to do it because they’re living in their house rent-free.”

One member of a strategic migration partnership – a council-led group designed to implement refugee schemes – said that during the scramble of getting thousands of Ukrainians to safety, they had to “find a balance between eliminating every single risk, which is just not possible”.

Many participants told researchers that visas for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** had been issued before the pre-arrival DBS and accommodation checks were completed. The checks were then failed, and a new host had to be found at short notice or guests were reluctant to leave.

In a briefing given to MPs in February by the Local Government Association, it was noted that local authorities were still reporting cases where visas were being issued to Ukrainians before councils had carried out sponsor checks.

Safeguarding alerts usually go to county councils, but some borough councils also provided responses. A handful of these councils provided a figure of less than five, due to data protection, meaning that the number of serious safeguarding alerts could be even higher.

A government spokesperson said: “Keeping sponsors and guests safe is a priority for the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

“All sponsors and all adults living in a sponsor’s household are subject to stringent checks before they are allowed to host a Ukrainian refugee, and we would urge local councils to contact the police if they suspect any exploitation.”

Over 180,000 visas have been issued to refugees through the Ukraine sponsorship scheme, government data shows.

**Load-Date:** April 13, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Riverdance stars pass on tips to budding Irish dancers from Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:692D-WKF1-JBNF-W14M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 30, 2023 Wednesday 4:38 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 262 words

**Byline:** David Young

**Highlight:** Refugees who have developed a passion for Irish dancing since move to Ireland attend a weekly class in Dublin.

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have found a love for [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) dancing since moving to [*Dublin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dublin) were treated to a lesson of a lifetime when [*Riverdance*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/riverdance) stars dropped in to pass on some tips.

The group attends a weekly dancing class in Rathmines Ukrainian Community Centre in south Dublin taken by 17-year-old Kristina Bondarenko.

The schoolgirl, who is originally from Odesa, began teaching herself Irish dancing six years ago using online videos.

Kristina and her mother Oksana moved to [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) following the outbreak of the war last year and they have lived in Lucan in west Dublin for the past year.

The teenager, who attends St Joseph’s College in Lucan, was giving her usual dance class on Wednesday when two special guests joined them.

Dancers Emma Mannion from Roscommon and Jason O’Neill from [*Belfast*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/belfast) are part of the troupe starring in the Riverdance 25th anniversary show at the Gaiety Theatre in Dublin.

The professionals put on a workshop for the Ukrainian Irish dancing enthusiasts on Wednesday afternoon.

“It was so unexpected, it was really exciting. It was so, so nice,” said Kristina.

“We were delighted to see real professionals, real Riverdance dancers, it was so good.

“In Ukraine I see Riverdance only on TV or the internet but I have seen the Riverdance performance three times in Ireland, so I was delighted to see them, it was so brilliant.”

Kristina said she would one day like to emulate the Riverdance stars and become a professional Irish dancer herself.

“I am training in Irish dance every day for one hour and I really want to grow up and be an Irish dancer,” she said.

**Load-Date:** August 30, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Charles to become first British monarch to address Bundestag*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67WR-VXY1-DY4H-K4BH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 30, 2023 Thursday 7:00 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 218 words

**Byline:** Tony Jones

**Highlight:** The King and Queen Consort’s state visit to Germany is the first of Charles’ reign.

**Body**

The King will become the first [*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) monarch to address German politicians from the [*Bundestag*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bundestag) , while the parliament is in session, during his historic state visit to the country.

[*Charles*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/charles) will deliver a speech which will celebrate the deep historical bonds and longstanding links between [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) and the UK.

The King and Queen Consort’s state visit to Germany, the first of Charles’ reign, began on Wednesday with a ceremonial greeting at Berlin’s iconic Brandenburg Gate.

During a speech at a state banquet staged in his honour on Wednesday evening, Charles pledged to “strengthen the connections” between the UK and Germany as he paid tribute to the “enduring value” of the two nations’ relationship.

During the day the King will attend a meeting with Chancellor Olaf Scholz in the Federal Chancellery building.

Later, the King and the Queen Consort will visit Wittenbergplaztz Food Market and meet a range of local business owners who will discuss the history of the market.

Germany has welcomed more than a million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** seeking sanctuary after [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) invaded their homeland and Charles will tour the Tegel Refugee Centre to meet some of the group.

Separately the Queen Consort will visit the Refugio House community centre, a meeting place for locals and new Berlin residents, including refugees.

**Load-Date:** March 30, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Do not let refugee scheme become Tinder for sex traffickers, PM is warned*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6540-1KS1-JBNF-W0J4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 30, 2022 Wednesday 5:08 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 726 words

**Byline:** Geraldine Scott

**Highlight:** Boris Johnson told a committee of MPs that it was key to have checks both on ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, and on those offering to house them.

**Body**

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) has defended the speed of offering refuge to those fleeing Ukraine after he was warned of the danger of schemes turning into "[*Tinder*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tinder) for sex traffickers".

The Prime Minister said it was important that "checks both ways" were being carried out before ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** could come to the UK, both to ensure those in need were who they said they were, and also that those offering help were fit to do so.

Appearing in front of the Commons Liaison Committee, Mr Johnson said there had already been cases of "people coming from that war zone who may not be entirely who they say they are" after it was revealed just 2,700 visas have been granted to people wanting to come to the UK under the Homes For Ukraine scheme despite applications reaching 28,300.

The UN refugee agency said four million people have now fled Ukraine since [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) launched its war on February 24.

Meanwhile, a charity which has helped about 70 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** apply for UK visas said none have been approved in the 13 days since the sponsorship scheme opened.

Volunteers for Love Bristol, which is operating in Poland, said so far everyone they have helped is still waiting for permission to come to the UK.

The PM said he was not going to berate civil servants and officials and "blame people for being slow" as he said they have to "balance some quite difficult objectives".

Mr Johnson said: "What I wanted was a system that was as light touch as possible and would enable people to come here, but would enable us also to do checks.

"We are outside the Schengen system, we have the advantage of being able to clarify people's status, (that) they're bona fide - that's not a bad thing if you want to have a programme that really works and commands confidence."

Dame [*Diana Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/diana-johnson) , the Labour chair of the Home Affairs Committee, told Mr Johnson that some anti-slavery and refugee groups had warned that the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship "risked operating as Tinder for sex traffickers".

He said: "I think that is one of the reasons why it is important to have as light touch as possible, but to have DBS checks and checks both ways to make sure we have a programme that is really working."

Defending the rate of progress in resettling refugees, the Prime Minister added: "These numbers are climbing.

"There is no cap on the family reunion scheme, that's already at the thick end of 25,000. That's a pretty big town."

Mr Johnson said he did not yet know how many of the 2,700 people who have been given visas for the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme had arrived in the UK.

He said although many Ukrainians wanted to stay in the region of their country and "in an ideal world" would want to go home, he said "a lot of them increasingly are now wanting to come to other European countries, they're wanting to come to the UK, and that's quite right".

Earlier, refugees minister, Lord Harrington, said progress is starting to be seen thanks to changes the Home Office has made to "streamline" the visa process.

But shadow levelling up secretary, Lisa Nandy, accused the Government of "wasting the amazing generosity that British people have shown".

The Prime Minister said that while the UK was "certainly looking at going up a gear in our support for the Ukrainians as they defend themselves", he was not echoing the call of Us President Joe Biden for Vladimir Putin to be removed from office.

Mr Johnson told MPs that "to desire a change of government in itself is not an ignoble thing" as he joked that some MPs on the Liaison Committee would "like a change in this Government".

But he said: "It's not the objective of the [*UK Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk-government) and it's very, very important everybody gets this, we are simply setting out to help to protect the people of Ukraine and to protect them against absolutely barbaric and unreasonable violence."

Further sanctions against Russia are expected to be announced shortly, and the PM said: "In my view, we should continue to intensify sanctions with a rolling programme until every single one of (Vladimir Putin's) troops is out of Ukraine."

He said simply agreeing to a ceasefire would not be enough for measures to be lifted, adding that "goes straight into Putin's playbook".

Meanwhile, UK defence intelligence analysts reported Russian units are "suffering heavy losses" and have been "forced to return to Belarus and Russia to reorganise and resupply".

**Load-Date:** March 30, 2022

**End of Document**



[*How to apply for the Homes for Ukraine scheme in the UK*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6528-2X71-DY4H-K4K2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 22, 2022 Tuesday 3:06 PM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 790 words

**Byline:** Kate Ng

**Highlight:** UK government has announced a scheme that would welcome more refugees into the country

**Body**

Britons have been asked to open their homes to Ukrainians fleeing their country, as part of a new "sponsored" humanitarian route to allow more [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) to travel to the UK.

The route will give Ukrainians without family links to the UK the opportunity come to the country in order to escape the war against [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia).

It comes after the government faced criticism for its response to the refugee crisis. Michael Gove, the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Secretary, has said that anyone keen to offer refugees shelter in the UK can register their interest through the new scheme from Monday 14 March.

Prime minister Boris Johnson told MPs that the route will allow "everybody in this country [to] offer a home to people fleeing [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ".

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine is in its third week and more than two million people have fled the country since it began.

On the morning of Tuesday 15 March, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities said almost 89,000 people have registered an interest in opening up their homes to a Ukrainian refugee.

Here is everything we know about how the scheme will work and how you can get involved:

What is it?

The new sponsorship scheme, called the Homes for Ukraine programme, will give British individuals, charities, businesses and community groups the opportunity to offer rooms to those escaping the conflict.

Those who enter the UK through this new route will be allowed to stay with members of the public for at least six months. Sponsored Ukrainians will be granted three years' leave to remain in the UK, with entitlement to work and access to public services.

How can I help?

The government is expected to launch its webpage and hotline later on Monday. Once it is available, you can register to offer accommodation and employment to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Anyone with a room or home available can offer it to a Ukrainian individual or a family. However, you will have to undergo a vetting process and Ukrainian applicants will undergo security checks.

If you do host a refugee, you will receive a "thank you" payment of £350 per month, with additional payments available to support school-age children who will need to be accommodated within the education system.

Gove added that local authority areas will be entitled to more than £10,000 per Ukrainian refugee using the new route to the UK.

A similar sponsorship programme [*was launched in 2016*](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/community-sponsorship-scheme-launched-for-refugees-in-the-uk) on a community level that allowed community groups including charities, faith groups, churches and businesses to help refugees resettle in the UK.

It was launched in response to the global refugee crisis -largely due to the Syrian Civil War -which saw 10.3 million people become newly displaced within the year. The UNHCR estimated that by the end of 2016, the global population of forcibly displaced people grew from 33.9 million in 1997 to a record high of 65.6 million in 2016.

Any member of the public could register through an online service to offer housing, work or support for resettling. These include helping people access public services, arranging transport and running errands, and welcoming people into the local area.

What security checks will be carried out?

The exact details of the security checks have not been set out, but Gove said steps will be taken to ensure people who might be "intent on exploitation" are prevented from "abusing" the new scheme.

He told Sky News: "We absolutely do need to make sure, first of all, that the people in Ukraine are who they say they are, so there need to be some security checks there.

"There's been understandable concern about the scheme being exploited possibly by criminal elements. So, that's the first thing.

"Then the second thing is we do need to make sure that people here are in a position to provide that support, which is why there will need to be security checks as well to make sure that those -and I think it would only ever be a tiny minority, but still -those who might be intent on exploitation can be prevented from abusing the system."

What is the current route for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***?

As of Friday 11 March, ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** need to have family in the UK in order to apply for a visa to travel here.

From Tuesday 15 March, they will be able to apply for the visas online. Until then, those with family links are still having to travel to visa application centres in Ukraine to give biometric information, such as fingerprints.

You can also [*help by donating to the people of Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-help-emergency-b2027490.html). Funds will go towards humanitarian aid, psychological support, and medical supplies for paramedics and doctors on the frontlines.

**Load-Date:** March 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Irish transport minister to speak to Ryanair about refugee price hike claims*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6521-8421-JBNF-W1NG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 21, 2022 Monday 10:29 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 439 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** Ryanair has rejected claims that the fares have jumped between Poland and Ireland.

**Body**

The [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) Transport Minister has said he will talk to [*Ryanair*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ryanair) after the airline was accused of hiking prices along one of the key routes to [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Ryanair has rejected claims that the fares have jumped between [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) and Ireland, an accusation levelled by Ukrainian [*Ambassador*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ambassador) to Ireland Larysa Gerasko last week.

We're in constant touch with Ryanair. Through the previous Covid crisis, on a number of occasions, they helped us in terms of getting people out of difficult places in different ways

Eamon Ryan

Eamon Ryan, the Irish Minister for Transport, is due to meet the Ukrainian Ambassador this week.

He said that he would listen to Ms Gerasko before discussing the issue with the Irish low-cost airline.

"We're in constant touch with Ryanair. Through the previous Covid crisis, on a number of occasions, they helped us in terms of getting people out of difficult places in different ways," Mr Ryan said on Monday.

"Let me first of all talk to the ambassador and then I'll talk to Ryanair without a doubt," he told RTE radio.

Mr Ryan also said that Ireland will be pushing for more punitive sanctions against Russia, when EU foreign ministers meet in Brussels later on Monday.

Irish Foreign Affairs Minister Simon Coveney will be at that meeting and Mr Ryan said that Ireland would back tougher measures taken against Russian oil and gas.

"We will be pushing for the further, stronger sanctions. We don't have fighter jets. We can't enforce a no fly zone over over Ukraine but we can and will put further pressure in every way we can on the Russian Government to desist and stop," he said.

He confirmed that Ireland has already taken in around 10,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

"We have also in this country, like every other European country, opened our doors and how we manage that - we have some 10,000 people arrived already - there will be more coming and the challenge that presents is immense beyond compare."

Asked about sanctions on Russian fuel, he said: "I think if we can get agreement and it has to be based on collective agreement, that's our strength, we would introduce whatever sanctions are applied straightaway."

Ireland is less reliant on Russian oil and gas than some European counterparts, with only 2-3% of gas supplies in the country coming from imported Russian gas.

While the Green Party leader said that he did not believe fuel rationing was a likely prospect, he stressed no one could predict the next direction of the war.

"We're in a war situation. No one knows how this might escalate. And we do have to provide wartime measures, in effect, to manage supplies, but I'm confident we can do that."

**Load-Date:** March 21, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine Take Shelter is giving hundreds of new homes to refugees. It was built by a 19-year-old Harvard student*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6558-5F71-DY4H-K2YN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 5, 2022 Tuesday 6:44 PM GMT

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**Section:** AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1415 words

**Byline:** Rachel Sharp

**Highlight:** EXCLUSIVE : EXCLUSIVE: Ukraine Take Shelter allows refugees to connect with people from across the globe who can offer them temporary shelter after they were forced to flee their homes. Its 19-year-old founder speaks to Rachel Sharp

**Body**

A [*Harvard*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/harvard) University student is matching ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) fleeing their homes in the war-torn nation with people offering spare rooms or a couch to sleep on in their homes all around the world.

Avi Schiffmann, a 19-year-old neurophilosophy student, spoke to the The Independent last month about how he and his classmate Marco Burnstein, 18, launched the website Ukraine Take Shelter to help the more than two million Ukrainians who have so far escaped from [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's attack as they desperately try to find temporary places to stay.

"I realised that the tools out there to help refugees find places to stay were really sub-par," he said.

"Many of these refugees are escaping on foot amid explosions and shelling. They are stressed and confused and scared and they are in new countries where they don't understand the language.

"And then they are just expected to go onto a government website that is full of jargon and nonsense and wait to be matched with somewhere to stay."

[*Follow live updates on Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-news-russia-war-putin-b2033928.html)

In the five weeks since Russia declared war, people from countries across the world have rallied in support of the Ukrainian people, donating items and sending funds.

Many have offered to take refugees into their homes but accounts on social media have revealed frustrations with their abilities to turn these offers into realities.

In the month Ukraine Take Shelter launched, thousands of people from "almost every country on the planet" have now posted listings offering entire homes, annexes, rooms and even couches in their houses for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to stay.

As of 11 March, a week after the site launched, there were 5,000 active listings on the website -not including an estimated 300 that hosts have taken down after their spaces have been filled, Mr Schiffmann said.

"For example, there were dozens of places in Hungary last night but by this morning there was almost none left," he said.

Less than a month later, more than 18,000 hosts had signed up to the site which had approximately 800,000 users, Mr Schiffmann and Mr Burnstein told the Associated Press in an article published on 5 April.

Many of the listings are in European countries close to Ukraine but offers have also come from hosts as far away as Israel, Canada and the US -as some refugees try to travel to countries where they have close ties.

"People are offering everything from a couch in their apartment for one person to an entire farm that can fit five families," Mr Schiffmann told The Independent last month.

"If you have an extra couch in your home in a small village in Hungary, you can hop on the website and post a listing and then refugees can contact you."

A quick search on the website revealed the likes of a long-term listing offering a three-bedroom home in downtown Ottawa for a family with children and a room for two people in Poland.

For people who don't have space to take in fleeing refugees, Mr Schiffmann said there are other offers flooding in such as help with transportation or offers to take in refugees' pets.

One listing from a host in Kraków, Poland, said they were willing to pay for an Airbnb for a refugee.

Meanwhile, a host in Prague was offering temporary foster care for up to two cats including vet bills and pet food costs.

"It's kind of a Craigslist for refugees," said Mr Schiffmann.

"The thing about the site is that it puts the power back into the hands of refugees -they can see the listings and pick from them rather than waiting around to be matched by a nonprofit or a government.

"They already feel powerless -now they can use their own initiative and go to the site and find a listing for themselves."

Since its launch, Mr Schiffmann said he has heard from both refugees and hosts who have connected through the website.

One heartwrenching message he shared with The Independent read: "Once again thank you for making that website, if it weren't for your website. He was losing hope to return alive."

He said: "A lot of people don't want to leave Ukraine if they don't know that they can get stable housing over the border.

"People are afraid for their lives but they are also afraid what will happen if they don't have any plans in place."

The teenager said that he came up with the idea a few days into the war when he began thinking of ways he could help Ukrainians from where he lives in the US.

He said he attended a protest against Russia's attack with a friend in San Diego and felt like it "wasn't really helping".

"I went with a friend to a protest in solidarity with Ukraine in Balboa Park where people were holding up signs reading 'Stop Putin' and Ukrainian flags," he said.

"And I thought that's great for the few hundred people there in San Diego but I thought 'it's not really doing anything'.

"It's just a bit of a show really that looks great on Instagram but isn't really helping the people in Ukraine."

The teenager decided that there had to be something more practical that he could do to help.

That night -28 February -he started researching and noticed that there was a challenge that could easily be solved.

He sent a tweet to his 54,000 followers: "A cool idea would be to set up a website to match ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to hosts in neighboring countries."

He got into bed and noticed his tweet gaining more and more traction.

"I thought 'yeh okay, I'm the perfect person to do it'. And so I jumped out of bed and got started," he said.

He contacted his friend and Harvard University computer sciences student Mr Burstein and they spent the next three days working around the clock until the website went live.

"We didn't sleep for three days, we just got it up as fast as possible," he said.

The 19-year-old already had a large public platform after he hit headlines for launching a website during the pandemic that tracked Covid-19 cases.

So he sought the help of this online community for expertise in the likes of cyber security and language translation.

"Anything I needed help with such as translations into Romanian I would tweet out and within moments, people reached out to help," he said.

The result is a user-friendly website that is entirely created by volunteers and is currently accessible in 12 different languages including Ukrainian, Russian and Polish.

People with space to welcome a refugee into their home can simply post a listing on the website.

A refugee then uses the simple search function to search for shelter in a specific area and the website shows them all the places nearby and what the hosts are offering.

The refugee can then contact a host directly through the contact details listed.

Amid concerns for the safety of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** as well as for hosts who are taking a stand against Russian aggression, it was important to make the website as secure as possible.

Neither the host nor the refugee share their exact locations on the site and refugees don't even need to make an account.

Email addresses are not shared on the website as people often use their first name and last name so can be more easily identified, Mr Schiffmann explained.

The student said that he was surprised that Western governments hadn't already set up something like his website for the millions fleeing from Ukraine.

"Lots of governments are trying to do what they can but -like with the Covid website -I don't understand how a 19-year-old with no design experience can be faster and create a more accessible website than the government of the most powerful country in the whole world," he said.

"And not just governments but also NGOs and nonprofits."

Mr Schiffmann said the site is now also being used by humanitarian aid groups on the ground with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and he is now working closely with some groups around improving the site further.

This article was originally published on 11 March and has been updated.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** April 5, 2022

**End of Document**



[*How to apply for the Homes for Ukraine scheme in the UK and everything you need to know*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650R-8K01-DY4H-K0NS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 15, 2022 Tuesday 9:28 AM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:2

**Length:** 790 words

**Byline:** Kate Ng

**Highlight:** UK government has announced a scheme that would welcome more refugees into the country

**Body**

Britons have been asked to open their homes to Ukrainians fleeing their country, as part of a new "sponsored" humanitarian route to allow more [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) to travel to the UK.

The route will give Ukrainians without family links to the UK the opportunity come to the country in order to escape the war against [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia).

It comes after the government faced criticism for its response to the refugee crisis. Michael Gove, the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Secretary, has said that anyone keen to offer refugees shelter in the UK can register their interest through the new scheme from Monday 14 March.

Prime minister Boris Johnson told MPs that the route will allow "everybody in this country [to] offer a home to people fleeing [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ".

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine is in its third week and more than two million people have fled the country since it began.

On the morning of Tuesday 15 March, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities said almost 89,000 people have registered an interest in opening up their homes to a Ukrainian refugee.

Here is everything we know about how the scheme will work and how you can get involved:

What is it?

The new sponsorship scheme, called the Homes for Ukraine programme, will give British individuals, charities, businesses and community groups the opportunity to offer rooms to those escaping the conflict.

Those who enter the UK through this new route will be allowed to stay with members of the public for at least six months. Sponsored Ukrainians will be granted three years' leave to remain in the UK, with entitlement to work and access to public services.

How can I help?

The government is expected to launch its webpage and hotline later on Monday. Once it is available, you can register to offer accommodation and employment to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Anyone with a room or home available can offer it to a Ukrainian individual or a family. However, you will have to undergo a vetting process and Ukrainian applicants will undergo security checks.

If you do host a refugee, you will receive a "thank you" payment of £350 per month, with additional payments available to support school-age children who will need to be accommodated within the education system.

Gove added that local authority areas will be entitled to more than £10,000 per Ukrainian refugee using the new route to the UK.

A similar sponsorship programme [*was launched in 2016*](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/community-sponsorship-scheme-launched-for-refugees-in-the-uk) on a community level that allowed community groups including charities, faith groups, churches and businesses to help refugees resettle in the UK.

It was launched in response to the global refugee crisis -largely due to the Syrian Civil War -which saw 10.3 million people become newly displaced within the year. The UNHCR estimated that by the end of 2016, the global population of forcibly displaced people grew from 33.9 million in 1997 to a record high of 65.6 million in 2016.

Any member of the public could register through an online service to offer housing, work or support for resettling. These include helping people access public services, arranging transport and running errands, and welcoming people into the local area.

What security checks will be carried out?

The exact details of the security checks have not been set out, but Gove said steps will be taken to ensure people who might be "intent on exploitation" are prevented from "abusing" the new scheme.

He told Sky News: "We absolutely do need to make sure, first of all, that the people in Ukraine are who they say they are, so there need to be some security checks there.

"There's been understandable concern about the scheme being exploited possibly by criminal elements. So, that's the first thing.

"Then the second thing is we do need to make sure that people here are in a position to provide that support, which is why there will need to be security checks as well to make sure that those -and I think it would only ever be a tiny minority, but still -those who might be intent on exploitation can be prevented from abusing the system."

What is the current route for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***?

As of Friday 11 March, ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** need to have family in the UK in order to apply for a visa to travel here.

From Tuesday 15 March, they will be able to apply for the visas online. Until then, those with family links are still having to travel to visa application centres in Ukraine to give biometric information, such as fingerprints.

You can also [*help by donating to the people of Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-help-emergency-b2027490.html). Funds will go towards humanitarian aid, psychological support, and medical supplies for paramedics and doctors on the frontlines.

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Bethenny Frankel raises $25m in aid for Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y2-P3C1-DY4H-K04K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 4:54 PM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 463 words

**Byline:** Meredith Clark

**Highlight:** The business mogul told The Independent that she plans to go to Ukraine as soon possible

**Body**

[*Bethenny Frankel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bethenny-frankel) has raised $25m in aid for ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) through her nonprofit foundation, BStrong.

"BSTRONG UPDATE: we have committed 15m in aid & have raised over TEN MILLION DOLLARS in $ donations for the refugee relocation program," the Real Housewives of New YorkCity star said in a tweet on Friday, 4 March. "This is MAJOR."

BStrong is a worldwide initiative in partnership with Global Empowerment Mission, which Frankel launched in 2017, that provides emergency assistance to people in crisis.

Since Russia first invaded [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) on 24 February, Frankel has documented the progress her team has made in relief efforts for displaced Ukrainians on Instagram.

ââ"We have set up our first of many border entry point relief camps at Medyka to initially provide basic relief to refugees & relocate them to safe & comfortable locations with friends & family," the Skinnygirl founder captioned her Instagram post on 26 Februrary. "Our 10M in aid is en route & we have raised 1.5M dollars & counting. A $250 donation can relocate a family, $50 gets someone a train ticket out...you can make a huge difference in the world."

On 3 March, Frankel detailed to the [*Independent*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/bethenny-frankel-ukraine-aid-b2027162.html) some of the behind-the-scenes work her foundation has done to aid ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

BSTRONG UPDATE: we have committed 15m in aid & have raised over TEN MILLION DOLLARS in $ donations for the refugee relocation program. This is MAJOR. [*@GEMmissions*](https://twitter.com/GEMmissions?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) bethenny.con/bstrong- Bethenny Frankel (@Bethenny) [*March 4, 2022*](https://twitter.com/Bethenny/status/1499742001239052291?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) "We have $10 million worth of aid being transported from a warehouse, likely into Poland, and driven into Ukraine," she wrote. "We've connected with two trusted people inside the Ukrainian government and that's going to help us with getting that aid in safely and distributing it sensibly."Frankel also shared that she intends to step foot into Ukraine herself, despite certain obstacles. "I do want to go to Ukraine myself and I've been looking into how to do that," she said. "I had a plan to go to Poland and help with those distribution lines, but where my crew is on the Ukraine-Poland border there's no cell service or internet available at the moment." View this post on Instagram[*A post shared by Bethenny Frankel (@bethennyfrankel)*](https://www.instagram.com/p/CaclfJTr91U/?utm_source=ig_embed&utm_campaign=loading)

Since 2017, BStrong has provided relief to humanitarian crises in Australia, Puerto Rico, Haiti, the Bahamas and more. Frankel believes that the key to a successful relief effort is being flexible and adaptable to constantly new information.

"When you're a small philanthropic organization, you can keep learning according to the information at hand," she said. "People appreciate when you're the kind of organization that can respond like that; everyone wants transparency and they want to feel like they're making a difference."

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Robert Rinder warns history is 'repeating itself' as refugees flee Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650R-SCD1-JBNF-W0K7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 15, 2022 Tuesday 12:13 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 437 words

**Byline:** Alex Green

**Highlight:** The barrister and TV judge was speaking from Przemysl, a Polish city on the border with Ukraine.

**Body**

Robert Rinder warned that history is "repeating itself" as he reported from Poland's border with [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

The barrister and TV judge has travelled to eastern [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) in a bid to help the grandparents of Oksana Platero, his former professional partner on Strictly Come Dancing, safely cross the border.

Speaking from the town of Przemysl, the 43-year-old challenged the speed at which the UK [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) is processing applicants fleeing Ukraine.

.[*@RobbieRinder*](https://twitter.com/RobbieRinder?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) reacts to [*@JamesCleverly*](https://twitter.com/JamesCleverly?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) 's response to the red tape that is currently slowing down the process of getting Ukraine refugees to the UK.He states that British people are willing and able to help and want to 'deliver on the promises they've made.' [*pic.twitter.com/phjELWVu3R*](https://t.co/phjELWVu3R) - Good Morning Britain (@GMB) [*March 15, 2022*](https://twitter.com/GMB/status/1503656300676268034?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

He told ITV's Good Morning Britain via video-link that he and his translator had both struggled to complete an online form required at the border from those fleeing the conflict.

He said: "[*People*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/people) should know what happened in the past or we're doomed to repeat it. I can tell GMB viewers and you that it is repeating itself.

"It's hard to believe, Susanna (Reid) and Richard (Madeley), that this is 2022.

"The trains arrive infrequently. When they do it is women, it is children, it is babies in mothers' arms.

"They arrive in wagons cheek to jowl, a sea of humanity with just very often one suitcase or the clothes on their back."

He compared scenes at the railway station to his Jewish grandparents' experience of fleeing to the UK during the Second World War.

Addressing the number of households that have now signed up to provide a home for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, he said: "This is not difficult. We don't even need to say that the Government are getting it wrong or doing the wrong thing.

"The British people are speaking up. All they want is (for the Government) to deliver - and I am going to repeat this because it bears repetition - to deliver on the promises that they have made.

"It is now close to 50,000 people that have stood up and offered their homes. They just want to get them here.

"It doesn't take much. It takes people on the ground to help with the paperwork."

Nearly 89,000 households have now signed up to take in ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the Russian invasion, according to the Department for Levelling Up, [*Housing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/housing) and Communities.

Ukrainian dancer Platero confirmed that her relatives had arrived safely in Poland.

Rinder was recently made an MBE for services to Holocaust education and awareness, after exploring the stories of Jewish families in a BBC series and speaking regularly in schools alongside survivors.

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*David and Victoria Beckham set up emergency fund with UNICEF to support Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YG-M8K1-JBNF-W272-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 9, 2022 Wednesday 4:07 PM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 457 words

**Byline:** Meredith Clark

**Highlight:** David and Victoria Beckham made a donation to the emergency fund, which provides immediate aid to refugees in Ukraine

**Body**

David and [*Victoria Beckham*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/victoria-beckham) have set up an emergency appeal to support [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) fleeing [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) amidst Russia's invasion of the country.

[*David Beckham*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/david-beckham) , who is a longtime Global Goodwill Ambassador, launched the emergency appeal on International Women's Day 2022 through his 7 Fund, in collaboration with [*UNICEF*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/unicef).

[*Ukraine latest - live updates*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-putin-war-zelensky-latest-b2030721.html%22%20title=%22link)

The couple shared the video announcement to their separate Instagram accounts on Tuesday, 8 March, where Beckham shared that his family had already made a donation to kickstart the appeal.

"Like you, I have watched the situation in Ukraine unfold with horror and disbelief," the retired football star said in the video. "Mothers forced to flee with their children. Families torn apart. Children pulled from their beds to become refugees overnight.

"With my family safe around me, I felt the helplessness we all share when faced with scenes of such despair," he said. "As a longtime Global Goodwill Ambassador, I know how experienced UNICEF is at deploying aid in conflict situations. They have people on the front lines as refugees pour over borders to be given shelter in neighbouring countries."

He continued, "That's why this International Women's Day I'm setting up an emergency appeal through my 7 Fund for UNICEF to help provide immediate aid. Victoria and I have made a donation on behalf of our family to kickstart the appeal. We would be so grateful if you would join us to help UNICEF support these innocent children. Please give what you can today."

View this post on Instagram [*A post shared by David Beckham (@davidbeckham)*](https://www.instagram.com/tv/Ca1xzXVIiQx/?utm_source=ig_embed&utm_campaign=loading)

The emergency appeal will help provide immediate aid, shelter, food, and medical supplies to children and families across Ukraine. In 2005, David Beckham became a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador and established the [*7 Fund*](https://7.org/about-david-beckham-7-fund/) through the organisation in 2015, which invests in the potential of children throughout Indonesia, Nepal, Uganda and El Salvador.

David and Victoria Beckham are not the only celebrities to donate money to relief efforts in Ukraine. Mila Kunis, [*who was born in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/mila-kunis-ukraine-nationality-family-russia-b2030504.html) , and her husband Ashton Kutcher said they will [*match donations of $3m*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/news/ukraine-russia-mila-kunis-ashton-kutcher-b2028418.html) to help aid ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

"I have always considered myself an American, a proud American," Kunis said in a video posted to her Instagram page. "I love everything this country has done for myself and my family. But today, I have never been more proud to be a Ukrainian."

Skinnygirl founder and RHONY alum Bethenny Frankel has also [*raised $25m*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/bethenny-frankel-aid-25-million-b2030276.html) through her foundation BStrong. Frankel and her team have established border entry relief camps throughout Ukraine, and are providing temporary housing for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*David and Victoria Beckham set up emergency fund with UNICEF to support Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y9-0G81-DY4H-K2HB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 6:38 PM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 457 words

**Byline:** Meredith Clark

**Highlight:** David and Victoria Beckham made a donation to the emergency fund, which provides immediate aid to refugees in Ukraine

**Body**

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View this post on Instagram [*A post shared by David Beckham (@davidbeckham)*](https://www.instagram.com/tv/Ca1xzXVIiQx/?utm_source=ig_embed&utm_campaign=loading)

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**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Former head of Orange Order must abide by Labour values - Sarwar*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XV-BS81-DY4H-K2CT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 6, 2022 Sunday 2:46 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 433 words

**Byline:** Craig Paton

**Highlight:** Henry Dunbar has been selected to stand in Airdrie North in the local elections in May.

**Body**

The former head of the [*Orange Order*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/orange-order) in [*Scotland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scotland) should abide by [*Labour*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/labour) values if he is to run as a candidate in May's council elections, leader Anas Sarwar has said.

Henry Dunbar, who was previously the grand master of the organisation, will stand for the party in the Airdrie North ward on [*North Lanarkshire*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/north-lanarkshire) Council.

Mr Dunbar told the Herald this week he "liked" the values of Labour and those of Mr Sarwar and UK leader Keir Starmer.

I expect every single person who stands as a Labour candidate or who is a Labour Party member to be outright in their opposition to all forms of prejudice or hate

Anas Sarwar

Speaking to journalists on the final day of his first in-person conference as leader, Mr Sarwar refused to say he whether he is comfortable with Mr Dunbar's selection as a candidate.

"Local candidates are selected by local parties," he said.

"He has the support of his local party. I expect him to abide by those values and I would hope that not only does he abide by those values, but he expresses horror and outrage at any form of prejudice or hate, and that's what I would expect from all of our candidates."

It is understood that any move to remove Mr Dunbar from contention centrally could be a breach of equalities legislation.

The leader - who emphasised in an almost hour-long speech to the party's conference on Friday the need for all members to stand up against prejudice - added: "Let me be absolutely unequivocal about this: I expect every single person who stands as a Labour candidate or who is a Labour Party member to be outright in their opposition to all forms of prejudice or hate.

"This really, really matters to me. I think anyone that listened to the speech on Friday will understand this really matters to me.

"Prejudice and hate is real - all forms of prejudice and hate are real.

"There can be no hierarchy of prejudice - we can't pick and choose - and therefore we can only credibly change our country if we accept, yes, [*Islamophobia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/islamophobia) exists, yes, racism exists, yes, homophobia exists, but anti-Catholic hatred exists too.

"For too many people that is a real experience.

"I am robust on that - anybody that breaches those principles, I will not be willing to tolerate."

Read More

[*Ukraine-Russia war news: Zelensky responds to nuclear plant attack*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-news-putin-war-b2028568.html)

[*Why has Russia invaded Ukraine? The conflict explained*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/why-russia-ukraine-invasion-putin-b2026550.html)

[*Sign The Independent's petition to help the people of Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugees-russia-petition-help-b2025628.html)

[*More than 80,000* ***Ukrainian******refugees*** *could arrive in Ireland, minister says*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ireland-department-of-justice-department-of-justice-europe-dublin-b2029680.html)

[*Hampshire couple take Molly the motorhome to help people fleeing Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ukraine-hampshire-andover-un-refugee-agency-gofundme-b2029669.html)

[*France condemns 'inhumane' British policy on* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/france-dominic-raab-calais-british-priti-patel-b2029660.html)

**Load-Date:** March 6, 2022

**End of Document**



[*From Boris Johnson to Priti Patel, Britain's handling of the refugee crisis has been shameful*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YH-M4G1-DY4H-K03H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 9, 2022 Wednesday 10:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** EDITORIALS,VOICES; Version:1

**Length:** 796 words

**Byline:** Editorial

**Highlight:** Editorial: The Ukrainian crisis has been handed to Michael Gove, who may have a more compassionate approach

**Body**

Boiled down to its most essential element, the prime minister's defence for his shameful response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis, apart from the usual pretence that it doesn't exist, is that Vladimir Putin has lined up Britain for special retaliatory treatment. Perhaps he will use the crisis to smuggle in spies, novichok and other means to avenge himself. Hence the need for "checks".

Perhaps the prime minister is underestimating the Russian secret service's ability to infiltrate other countries, which has sadly been proved with fatal consequences on too many occasions. If President Putin wants to shoot, poison or strangle an enemy in any corner of the Earth, he will find a way to do so. He does not need to dress his spies up as bogus ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees). Besides, checks can be evaded and espionage is one of the few areas where Russia enjoys a global advantage.

Other countries have managed to allow in vastly more ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** with checks and controls, but in a rather more efficient manner. Even allowing for geography and the natural tendency for refugees to gather in bordering countries, the disparity in numbers of asylum seekers granted shelter is stark. On the prime minister's own figure, about 1,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have made it to the UK.

For context, around 2,000 have entered Ireland (with passport-free access to the UK under the common travel area), some 50,000 have gone to Germany and - albeit as a close neighbour - around 1.2 million to Poland. The Home Office was this week [*condemned*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-refugees-home-office-ireland-b2030874.html) for "dirty propaganda" after appearing to protest that Ireland's welcome for Ukraine refugees was a security threat to the UK.

The Ukrainian ambassador to the UK [*told MPs this week*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-russia-invasion-refugees-visa-uk-b2031832.html) , with infinite politeness, "We also believe some bureaucratic procedures [for visas] could be simplified". He added: "I believe something like dropping everything (all visa checks) could be considered."

It is not nearly good enough, given the government's boastful rhetoric and the unfortunate fact that it was the west's collective failure to deter President Putin that visited this humanitarian disaster on Europe. Britain shares in the blame for that.

It is simply not the case, for example, that there is some unlimited guarantee of safety being offered to Ukrainians. The schemes are limited, highly conditional and - in any case - not even fully operational. For a distressed mother and child from, say, Mariupol, who knows no one in the UK, doesn't know where to find a "sponsor", and doesn't qualify for a work visa, there is no way to safety in Britain. Even if she and the child did qualify for one of the schemes, she would find them difficult to use.

In the Commons and elsewhere, the government continues to "gaslight" MPs and journalists who find real-life cases of Ukrainian people, with legitimate claims to come to Britain, being sent away from supposed visa access centres and having to navigate bureaucratic obstacles.

Old habits and attitudes die hard - especially in the mind of [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel). For years, the home secretary, like her predecessors, has been fostering a hostile environment for migration; and indeed even for those of the Windrush generation who thought themselves well-settled in the UK. It is no great surprise that Ukrainians encounter the same sort of attitudes so many others have encountered in the past.

It has hardly been one of Ms Patel's finest hours, and the longer she spends in the post as home secretary, the more challenging parts of her brief are passed to other cabinet ministers.

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment sign up to our free weekly Voices Dispatches newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

The Ukrainian crisis has been handed to Michael Gove, who may have a more compassionate approach - it would be difficult for him to be more flinty than Ms Patel. She cannot be indulged by [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) for much longer.

The prime minister has a formulation he likes to use about this refugee crisis which is that the government is doing "as much as it can". This actually means as much as its backbenchers and reactionary elements in the grassroots will allow him to. The ones who see Putin's assassins in the buggy of every Ukrainian child refugee, and a wannabe welfare scrounger pushing it.

This time, though, public opinion, including among Tory voters, is very much in favour of helping the homeless Ukrainians, and that shift in opinion is starting to be reflected in some of the more sensitive parts of the parliamentary Conservative Party.

No doubt Mr Gove will be offering a more humane face to the policy than Ms Patel has done. But it is all about the numbers. Mr Johnson says hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians will be helped to Britain soon. We shall see.

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Homes for Ukraine: How to apply for the sponsorship scheme*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650H-MSH1-JBNF-W2GW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 11:45 AM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 784 words

**Byline:** Kate Ng

**Highlight:** UK government has announced a scheme that would welcome more refugees into the country

**Body**

Britons have been asked to open their homes to Ukrainians fleeing their country, as part of a new "sponsored" humanitarian route to allow more [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) to travel to the UK.

The route will give Ukrainians without family links to the UK the opportunity come to the country in order to escape the war against [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia).

It comes after the government faced criticism for its response to the refugee crisis. Michael Gove, the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Secretary, has said that anyone keen to offer refugees shelter in the UK can register their interest through the new scheme from Monday 14 March.

Prime minister Boris Johnson told MPs that the route will allow "everybody in this country [to] offer a home to people fleeing [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ".

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine is in its third week and more than two million people have fled the country since it began.

Gove said more than 3,000 visas have been issued so far to Ukrainians seeking refuge in the UK, and estimates that "tens of thousands" more will be provided.

Here is everything we know about how the scheme will work and how you can get involved:

What is it?

The new sponsorship scheme, called the Homes for Ukraine programme, will give British individuals, charities, businesses and community groups the opportunity to offer rooms to those escaping the conflict.

Those who enter the UK through this new route will be allowed to stay with members of the public for at least six months. Sponsored Ukrainians will be granted three years' leave to remain in the UK, with entitlement to work and access to public services.

How can I help?

The government is expected to launch its webpage and hotline later on Monday. Once it is available, you can register to offer accommodation and employment to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Anyone with a room or home available can offer it to a Ukrainian individual or a family. However, you will have to undergo a vetting process and Ukrainian applicants will undergo security checks.

If you do host a refugee, you will receive a "thank you" payment of £350 per month, with additional payments available to support school-age children who will need to be accommodated within the education system.

Gove added that local authority areas will be entitled to more than £10,000 per Ukrainian refugee using the new route to the UK.

A similar sponsorship programme [*was launched in 2016*](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/community-sponsorship-scheme-launched-for-refugees-in-the-uk) on a community level that allowed community groups including charities, faith groups, churches and businesses to help refugees resettle in the UK.

It was launched in response to the global refugee crisis -largely due to the Syrian Civil War -which saw 10.3 million people become newly displaced within the year. The UNHCR estimated that by the end of 2016, the global population of forcibly displaced people grew from 33.9 million in 1997 to a record high of 65.6 million in 2016.

Any member of the public could register through an online service to offer housing, work or support for resettling. These include helping people access public services, arranging transport and running errands, and welcoming people into the local area.

What security checks will be carried out?

The exact details of the security checks have not been set out, but Gove said steps will be taken to ensure people who might be "intent on exploitation" are prevented from "abusing" the new scheme.

He told Sky News: "We absolutely do need to make sure, first of all, that the people in Ukraine are who they say they are, so there need to be some security checks there.

"There's been understandable concern about the scheme being exploited possibly by criminal elements. So, that's the first thing.

"Then the second thing is we do need to make sure that people here are in a position to provide that support, which is why there will need to be security checks as well to make sure that those -and I think it would only ever be a tiny minority, but still -those who might be intent on exploitation can be prevented from abusing the system."

What is the current route for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***?

As of Friday 11 March, ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** need to have family in the UK in order to apply for a visa to travel here.

From Tuesday 15 March, they will be able to apply for the visas online. Until then, those with family links are still having to travel to visa application centres in Ukraine to give biometric information, such as fingerprints.

You can also [*help by donating to the people of Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-help-emergency-b2027490.html). Funds will go towards humanitarian aid, psychological support, and medical supplies for paramedics and doctors on the frontlines.

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian teenager who helped refugees settle in Britain aces his A-levels*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6665-N471-F072-4204-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

August 19, 2022 Friday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 5

**Length:** 512 words

**Byline:** BRONWEN WEATHERBY

**Body**

A Ukrainian student who became a translator for the British army after Russia invaded his home country has aced his A-levels.

Zorian Tytych, 18, got four As and has been given a place at Durham University while his father fights on the front line. The teenager came to the UK to study prior to the outbreak of war and watched in horror as his family fled his home city of Kyiv.

While studying at Cardiff Sixth Form College in Wales he volunteered as a translator to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** staying with host families in the capital and after sitting his exams he signed up as a translator with the armed forces to help some of the 10,000 Ukrainian soldiers receiving training in the UK.

His father, a lawyer, signed up to fight for his country the day after the war began and is on active service stationed on the Belarus border. "Before the war started my mother and father were lawyers," said Zorian. "Dad was on the Ukrainian committee for judicial reform, taking things up to the European Union level.

"He joined the military the day after the war started, signing up to the territorial defence and receiving basic training. He did this because he wanted to protect his home and support his country. My cousin is doing the same and is now based near Kherson where he is right in the thick of it and all the shelling. My uncle is currently in the recruitment process for joining the army."

He added: "I cannot think too deeply about my father as it would drive me mad with worry, but I am very proud of him. I know he would feel it is a disgrace if he didn't join the army. But I cannot think about it too much as it just makes me really concerned."

Despite fearing for his family, Zorian was able to get an A grade in all four of his subjects - physics, maths, biology and chemistry. His mother was forced to evacuate to Lviv in western Ukraine when gunfire drew too near to their home but she has since returned after Russian forces retreated from the city.

He said: "As well as studying for my A-levels at Cardiff Sixth Form College, I have been volunteering, visiting the homes of British people in Cardiff who have taken in ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. I am helping these families by translating documents for them, helping them with day-to-day tasks and being a friend to them. They need someone they can communicate with. Britain now has 10,000 Ukrainian soldiers receiving training from the British Army here in the UK and they need translators and helpers."

Zorian said that as he is unable to safely return home he will remain in the UK to study and stay with his godmother in London before heading to Durham in September.

College principal Gareth Collier said Zorian had been volunteering throughout his "very busy A-level revision period". He said one host family who Zorian worked with described him as "an example of an outstanding, selfless individual willing to help others where he can". Mr Collier added: "He has been an active member of the school community and we are delighted that he is able to continue his education here in the UK with these tremendous results."

PA

**Load-Date:** August 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UK government denies giving cool welcome to Ukraine refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y6-C2D1-JBNF-W1XN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 6:40 PM GMT

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**Length:** 422 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has defended his government's treatment of Ukrainians fleeing war, after France accused U.K. authorities of "inhumane" behavior towards the refugees

**Body**

British Prime Minister [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) on Monday defended his government's treatment of Ukrainians fleeing war, after [*France*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/france) accused U.K. authorities of "inhumane" behavior towards the refugees.

Johnson said Britain was being "very, very generous," but wouldn't have "a system where people can come into the U.K. without any checks or any controls at all."

Britain says it expects to take in as many as 200,000 Ukrainians displaced by Russia's invasion, and has set no upper limit on the number it will accept.

But very few have managed to reach Britain so far. The Home Office said "around 50" visas had been granted by Sunday, though Johnson said Monday he wasn't sure that number was correct.

French Interior Minister [*Gerald Darmanin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gerald-darmanin) said Sunday that hundreds of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the English Channel port of Calais had been turned away and told by British authorities that they must obtain visas at U.K. embassies in Paris or Brussels.

Calling that "a bit inhumane," Darmanin urged Britain to "stop the technocratic nit-picking" and be more generous. He said he had urged Britain to set up a consulate in Calais to deal with applications.

Home Secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) denied Britain was turning anyone away, though the British government confirmed Monday that it didn't have a visa center in Calais, meaning applications need to be made elsewhere.

Patel said Britain had set up a visa application center "en route to Calais" but not at the port, to avoid bottlenecks.

"It is wrong to say we're just turning people back, we're absolutely not, we're supporting those that have been coming to Calais," she said in the House of Commons.

European Union nations are allowing Ukrainians live and work for up to three years without having to go through a formal asylum-seeking process. The U.K., which left the bloc last year, isn't waiving the paperwork, citing security reasons, though it is loosening its rules.

Ukrainians based in Britain can bring over family members, including spouses, parents and children. The government has also announced a separate route for groups in the U.K. to sponsor ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, but details of that were still being worked out.

Patel said the U.K. was flying staff out to countries neighboring [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) "so we can fast-track and speed up applications."

The United Nations says more than 1.7 million people have fled the war in Ukraine, in what it calls Europe's fastest-growing refugee crisis since World War II.

\_\_\_

Follow the AP's coverage of the Russia-Ukraine war at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine Take Shelter is giving hundreds of new homes to refugees. It was built by a 19-year-old Harvard student*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YY-CKB1-DY4H-K50K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 11, 2022 Friday 9:20 PM GMT

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**Section:** AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:2

**Length:** 1347 words

**Byline:** Rachel Sharp

**Highlight:** EXCLUSIVE : EXCLUSIVE: Ukraine Take Shelter allows refugees to connect with people from across the globe who can offer them temporary shelter after they were forced to flee their homes. It's 19-year-old founder speaks to Rachel Sharp

**Body**

A [*Harvard*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/harvard) University student is matching ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) fleeing their homes in the war-torn nation with people offering spare rooms or a couch to sleep on in their homes all around the world.

Avi Schiffmann, a 19-year-old neurophilosophy student, told The Independent that he launched the website Ukraine Take Shelter to help the more than two million Ukrainians who have so far escaped from [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's attack as they desperately try to find temporary places to stay.

"I realised that the tools out there to help refugees find places to stay were really sub-par," he said.

"Many of these refugees are escaping on foot amid explosions and shelling. They are stressed and confused and scared and they are in new countries where they don't understand the language.

"And then they are just expected to go onto a government website that is full of jargon and nonsense and wait to be matched with somewhere to stay."

[*Follow live updates on Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-news-russia-war-putin-b2033928.html)

In the two weeks since Russia declared war, people from countries across the world have rallied in support of the Ukrainian people, donating items and sending funds.

Many have offered to take refugees into their homes but accounts on social media have revealed frustrations with their abilities to turn these offers into realities.

In the week since Ukraine Take Shelter launched, thousands of people from "almost every country on the planet" have now posted listings offering entire homes, annexes, rooms and even couches in their houses for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to stay.

As of Friday morning, there were 5,000 active listings on the website -not including an estimated 300 that hosts have taken down after their spaces have been filled, Mr Schiffmann said.

"For example, there were dozens of places in Hungary last night but by this morning there was almost none left," he said.

Many of the listings are in European countries close to Ukraine but offers have also come from hosts as far away as Israel, Canada and the US -as some refugees try to travel to countries where they have close ties.

"People are offering everything from a couch in their apartment for one person to an entire farm that can fit five families," he said.

"If you have an extra couch in your home in a small village in Hungary, you can hop on the website and post a listing and then refugees can contact you."

A quick search on the website on Friday morning revealed the likes of a long-term listing offering a three-bedroom home in downtown Ottawa for a family with children and a room for two people in Poland.

For people who don't have space to take in fleeing refugees, Mr Schiffmann said there are other offers flooding in such as help with transportation or offers to take in refugees' pets.

One listing from a host in Kraków, Poland, online on Friday said they were willing to pay for an Airbnb for a refugee.

Meanwhile, a host in Prague was offering temporary foster care for up to two cats including vet bills and pet food costs.

"It's kind of a Craigslist for refugees," said Mr Schiffmann.

"The thing about the site is that it puts the power back into the hands of refugees -they can see the listings and pick from them rather than waiting around to be matched by a nonprofit or a government.

"They already feel powerless -now they can use their own initiative and go to the site and find a listing for themselves."

Since its launch, Mr Schiffmann said he has heard from both refugees and hosts who have connected through the website.

One heartwrenching message he shared with The Independent read: "Once again thank you for making that website, if it weren't for your website. He was losing hope to return alive."

He said: "A lot of people don't want to leave Ukraine if they don't know that they can get stable housing over the border.

"People are afraid for their lives but they are also afraid what will happen if they don't have any plans in place."

The teenager said that he came up with the idea a few days into the war when he began thinking of ways he could help Ukrainians from where he lives in the US.

He said he attended a protest against Russia's attack with a friend in San Diego and felt like it "wasn't really helping".

"I went with a friend to a protest in solidarity with Ukraine in Balboa Park where people were holding up signs reading 'Stop Putin' and Ukrainian flags," he said.

"And I thought that's great for the few hundred people there in San Diego but I thought 'it's not really doing anything'.

"It's just a bit of a show really that looks great on Instagram but isn't really helping the people in Ukraine."

The teenager decided that there had to be something more practical that he could do to help.

That night -28 February -he started researching and noticed that there was a challenge that could easily be solved.

He sent a tweet to his 54,000 followers: "A cool idea would be to set up a website to match ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to hosts in neighboring countries."

He got into bed and noticed his tweet gaining more and more traction.

"I thought 'yeh okay, I'm the perfect person to do it'. And so I jumped out of bed and got started," he said.

He contacted his friend and Harvard University computer sciences student Marco Burstein and they spent the next three days working around the clock until the website went live.

"We didn't sleep for three days, we just got it up as fast as possible," he said.

The 19-year-old already had a large public platform after he hit headlines for launching a website during the pandemic that tracked Covid-19 cases.

So he sought the help of this online community for expertise in the likes of cyber security and language translation.

"Anything I needed help with such as translations into Romanian I would tweet out and within moments, people reached out to help," he said.

The result is a user-friendly website that is entirely created by volunteers and is currently accessible in 12 different languages including Ukrainian, Russian and Polish.

People with space to welcome a refugee into their home can simply post a listing on the website.

A refugee then uses the simple search function to search for shelter in a specific area and the website shows them all the places nearby and what the hosts are offering.

The refugee can then contact a host directly through the contact details listed.

Amid concerns for the safety of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** as well as for hosts who are taking a stand against Russian aggression, it was important to make the website as secure as possible.

Neither the host nor the refugee share their exact locations on the site and refugees don't even need to make an account.

Email addresses are not shared on the website as people often use their first name and last name so can be more easily identified, Mr Schiffmann explained.

The student said that he was surprised that Western governments hadn't already set up something like his website for the millions fleeing from Ukraine.

"Lots of governments are trying to do what they can but -like with the Covid website -I don't understand how a 19-year-old with no design experience can be faster and create a more accessible website than the government of the most powerful country in the whole world," he said.

"And not just governments but also NGOs and nonprofits."

Mr Schiffmann said the site is now also being used by humanitarian aid groups on the ground with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and he is now working closely with some groups around improving the site further.

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**Load-Date:** March 11, 2022

**End of Document**



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The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 17, 2022 Thursday 11:04 AM GMT

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**Section:** AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1347 words

**Byline:** Rachel Sharp

**Highlight:** EXCLUSIVE : EXCLUSIVE: Ukraine Take Shelter allows refugees to connect with people from across the globe who can offer them temporary shelter after they were forced to flee their homes. It's 19-year-old founder speaks to Rachel Sharp

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**Load-Date:** March 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Who will sort out the mess in the UK's refugee crisis response?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6505-H921-JBNF-W222-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 12, 2022 Saturday 10:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** POLITICS EXPLAINED,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:3

**Length:** 718 words

**Byline:** Adam Forrest

**Highlight:** POLITICS EXPLAINED: Boris Johnson is hoping Priti Patel and Michael Gove can pick up the pace after a shambolic start to the resettlement of fleeing Ukrainians. Adam Forrest takes a closer look

**Body**

The government's response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis is not going well. The refusal to follow the EU and drop visa requirements has caused public outrage. Britain has proved to be a safe haven for only a tiny trickle of the millions of people fleeing the Russian assault.

Plans to open up an additional route have been subject to above-average levels of chaos in Whitehall, as No 10 and Home Office officials squabble over who is to blame for the failure to set out a clear plan that meets the scale of the crisis.

Home secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) has come in for the fiercest criticism from MPs of all parties. Tory backbenchers have attacked the "disgraceful" approach taken by her department and the "snail's pace" at which help has been offered.

But Patel's allies are now briefing that [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) and Downing Street are to blame for the sluggish rollout of routes for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to come to Britain.

No 10 intervened earlier this week to stop a plan by Patel to open up a more generous "humanitarian route" for refugees fleeing the war, sources told Sky News, saying: "The problem is No 10 - the PM and [chief of staff] Steve Barclay - who are personally slapping this down."

So who will sort out the mess? Could [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) , a man never shy of adding a job or three to his ministerial portfolio, come to the rescue?

The fact that the prime minister chose Gove to take control of the government's new sponsorship scheme - expected to be set out on Monday - doesn't say much for his faith in Patel and her department.

The sponsorship route is aimed at allowing Britain's local authorities, community groups and individuals to provide a home and a support network to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. It is not a resettlement route, like the one opened up to 20,000 Afghan refugees, since it will not grant Ukrainians indefinite residence in the UK.

Although the government is branding the route a "humanitarian sponsorship pathway", it doesn't amount to the kind of humanitarian protection offered by the EU, which has lifted all restrictions on a temporary basis.

Refugee charities have warned that the existing community sponsorship scheme in the UK - which has taken in only around 660 refugees since 2016 - is wholly inadequate for dealing with mass displacement.

Charities have told The Independent that sponsorship also requires a lot of time, training and paperwork to organise. They warned that Ukrainians may end up in hotels and hostels, like Afghan refugees, because of the "decimation" of government funding in recent years.

Mr Gove's department has said Britons offering accommodation to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** through the new route will receive a "thank you" payment of £350 per month.

Sponsored refugees will be granted 36 months leave to remain in the UK, with entitlement to public services, while sponsors will be expected to guarantee a minimum stay of six months.

But a lot of questions remain. The government appears to be expecting refugees and sponsors to find each other on social media, or through family and friendship networks, before making an official application online. Both parties will have to be vetted and undergo security checks.

It's why the Refugee Council has criticised the "bureaucratic hurdles" the government appears to be putting in the way - and said the scheme "will inevitably be restricted to those who are known to people in the UK".

Gove has certainly proved more adept than Patel at adapting to these fast-moving events, and Johnson will have to hope he can also work sufficiently well with council chiefs, who are bound to take on much of the responsibility for arranging housing needs.

Conservative MPs will have to hope so, too. Tired Tories are pretty content with the prime minister's handling of the big diplomatic issues around [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , after several months stuck in the purgatory of Partygate.

But there are fears that the refugee response - if it continues to be viewed as an almighty shambles - could damage the party's hoped-for poll recovery ahead of the local elections in May.

Ultimately, the responsibility lies with the prime minister. Ukraine may have put No 10's birthday cake ambush antics and drinks parties in perspective, but failure to address the current crisis on his plate could put him back in the bad books of his notoriously fickle backbenchers.

**Load-Date:** March 13, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Home news in brief*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:664N-VV41-JCS0-D3B4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

August 12, 2022 Friday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 22

**Length:** 564 words

**Body**

Musical Youth drummer Frederick Waite Jr dies aged 55

Grammy-nominated reggae band Musical Youth announced that drummer Frederick Waite Jr has died at the age of 55. The Birmingham band revealed the news yesterday, hailing him as a "musical legend who inspired many young musicians".

In a statement on Twitter, they wrote: "We are sad to announce the passing of Musical Youth's drummer Frederick Waite Jr. Our thoughts go out to him and his family during this sad time. We have lost a musical legend, who inspired many young musicians over the last 40 years."

Musical Youth were formed in 1979 and are best known for their hit "Pass The Dutchie", which went to No 1 in 1982. They went on to release two albums, 1982's The Youth Of Today and Different Style! in 1983, and some members performed at the closing ceremony of the Commonwealth Games on Monday. PA

Police officer sacked for faking fake girlfriend's death

A police officer who claimed his fake girlfriend died of cancer to get days off work would have been sacked for the "odious" gross misconduct had he not resigned, chief constable Sir David Thompson said.

Harry Sarkar, 21, a constable with West Midlands Police, "maintained a detailed tissue of lies to colleagues and supervisors about a fake girlfriend, her fake illness, her fake death, and subsequent fake funeral", the force said. The student officer resigned before the fast-track misconduct hearing at the force's Birmingham headquarters yesterday, which would have seen him dismissed without notice had he still been on the payroll. PA

Charity calls for front row Eurovision seats for Ukraine refugees

A UK-based charity has called for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and their UK host families to be given "priority tickets" to Eurovision 2023. British Future has proposed Welcomers Eurovision, designed to celebrate the efforts of those in Britain and other European nations who have offered their homes to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Speaking about the proposal, the director of British Future Sunder Katwala said: "The 2023 Eurovision is the perfect opportunity to celebrate the warm welcome that thousands of Brits have offered to Ukrainians fleeing the war. Britain is hosting the contest on behalf of 2022 winners Ukraine - what better way to embody that than by inviting some of the thousands of citizens who are now hosting Ukrainian families in their homes?" PA

Half of six-year-olds not meeting exercise targets

Just under half of British six-year-olds are not meeting their daily recommended exercise targets, according to a new study. Researchers found that 47 per cent of children that age are not doing enough physical activity. Experts say children aged five to 18 should get at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous exercise a day to benefit their physical and mental health.

University of Cambridge and University of Southampton researchers provided 712 six-year-olds with accelerometers, which measure heart rate and movement and found that they were, on average, sedentary for an average of five hours each day, according to the study, published in the Journal of Physical Activity and Health.

On average, the youngsters engaged in 7.5 hours of "low level" physical activity and 65 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous activity. Boys were more likely to reach the target than girls, with 63 per cent of boys adhering to the current UK guidelines compared with 42 per cent of girls. PA

**Load-Date:** August 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*More funding announced as Kyiv asks for more Britons to take in Ukrainians*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67VM-WG41-JBNF-W2F0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 25, 2023 Saturday 12:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 645 words

**Byline:** Patrick Daly

**Highlight:** Ukraine’s ambassador to the UK said some ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** still needed assistance.

**Body**

British households taking in ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have been in the country for more than a year are to receive an increased “thank you” payment as Kyiv’s ambassador implored more sponsors to offer accommodation.

The Ukrainian ambassador to the UK thanked the British people for their generosity in coming to the aid of those fleeing the conflict caused by Russia’s invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

But Vadym Prystaiko added that “some still need your help” as he called for “those who can” to open their doors to families displaced from their homeland.

As part of the UK’s response to Russian president Vladimir Putin’s attack on [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) in February 2022, ministers established the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine scheme, with thousands of volunteers coming forward to offer shelter to refugees.

Close to 118,000 Ukrainians have been invited into British homes since the scheme began, according to the Department for Levelling Up, [*Housing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/housing) and Communities.

The unprovoked and unjustified war still rages in the Ukraine and I ask those who can, please come forward and offer your support

Ukrainian ambassador to the UK Vadym Prystaiko

But with the war in eastern Europe still raging, officials said there are Ukrainians looking to be matched with new sponsors.

To strengthen support for households and councils taking in refugees, the UK Government has announced increased funding.

The levelling-up department has recently written to all those who have previously expressed interest in becoming Homes For Ukraine hosts to thank them for coming forward to offer their help in matching Ukrainian families with new hosts.

Those hosting Ukrainians who have already been in the UK for over 12 months will be entitled to increased “thank you” payments as part of an incentive to take people in.

Hosts are currently paid £350 per month as a “thank you” payment, subject to the accommodation they have to offer.

Other measures announced on Saturday include per capita funding for councils for each new arrival including £150 million to support guests into their own homes.

Some £11.5 million will be given towards intensive English language courses and employment support for up to 10,000 individuals to boost the number of Ukrainians entering the labour market.

A total of £100 million will be given to 145 councils in England by the end of March as part of the £500 million Local Authority Housing Fund to help obtain, repurpose or build housing for arrivals on resettlement programmes, department officials said.

With England due to take on Ukraine in a qualifying match for the men’s Euro 2024 football competition on Sunday, ministers have offered 1,000 free tickets to Ukrainians and their sponsors to attended the match at Wembley Stadium.

Ukrainian ambassador Mr Prystaiko said: “I am honoured and humbled by your countries’ generosity and am grateful to all the local councils and all the families who have opened up their homes, their hearts and sometimes wallets to Ukrainians fleeing from the horrors of war.

“160,000 Ukrainian women and children have reached British shores and have been welcomed in your communities and schools.

“But some still need your help.

“The unprovoked and unjustified war still rages in the Ukraine and I ask those who can, please come forward and offer your support.”

Levelling-Up Secretary [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) said: “One year on from the first person arriving in the UK under our Homes For Ukraine scheme I remain incredibly proud of this country’s response, with the British public having shown their true generosity of spirit and their enduring belief in freedom.

“Ukrainians have embraced every aspect of their new lives in the UK – sending their children to local schools, entering the jobs market and working on their English language skills.

“This is proof not only of the immense bravery and resilience of the Ukrainian people but the huge value they are bringing to our communities.”

**Load-Date:** March 24, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Britain turns to Gove to right the wrongs blighting our refugee response*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YM-HVV1-JCS0-D28Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 10, 2022 Thursday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 2

**Length:** 765 words

**Byline:** EDITORIAL

**Body**

Boiled down to its most essential element, the prime minister's defence for his shameful response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis, apart from the usual pretence that it doesn't exist, is that Vladimir Putin has lined up Britain for special retaliatory treatment. Perhaps he will use the crisis to smuggle in spies, novichok and other means to avenge himself. Hence the need for "checks".

Perhaps the prime minister is underestimating the Russian secret service's ability to infiltrate other countries, which has sadly been proved with fatal consequences on too many occasions. If President Putin wants to shoot, poison or strangle an enemy in any corner of the Earth, he will find a way to do so. He does not need to dress his spies up as bogus ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. Besides, checks can be evaded and espionage is one of the few areas where Russia enjoys a global advantage.

Other countries have managed to allow in vastly more ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** with checks and controls, but in a rather more efficient manner. Even allowing for geography and the natural tendency for refugees to gather in bordering countries, the disparity in numbers of asylum seekers granted shelter is stark. On the prime minister's own figure, about 1,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have made it to the UK.

For context, around 2,000 have entered Ireland (with passport-free access to the UK under the common travel area), some 50,000 have gone to Germany and - albeit as a close neighbour - around 1.2 million to Poland. The Home Office was this week condemned for "dirty propaganda" after appearing to protest that Ireland's welcome for Ukraine refugees was a security threat to the UK.

The Ukrainian ambassador to the UK told MPs this week, with infinite politeness, "We also believe some bureaucratic procedures [for visas] could be simplified". He added: "I believe something like dropping everything (all visa checks) could be considered."

It is not nearly good enough, given the government's boastful rhetoric and the unfortunate fact that it was the west's collective failure to deter President Putin that visited this humanitarian disaster on Europe. Britain shares in the blame for that.

It is simply not the case, for example, that there is some unlimited guarantee of safety being offered to Ukrainians. The schemes are limited, highly conditional and - in any case - not even fully operational. For a distressed mother and child from, say, Mariupol, who knows no one in the UK, doesn't know where to find a "sponsor", and doesn't qualify for a work visa, there is no way to safety in Britain. Even if she and the child did qualify for one of the schemes, she would find them difficult to use.

In the Commons and elsewhere, the government continues to "gaslight" MPs and journalists who find real-life cases of Ukrainian people, with legitimate claims to come to Britain, being sent away from supposed visa access centres and having to navigate bureaucratic obstacles.

Old habits and attitudes die hard - especially in the mind of Priti Patel. For years, the home secretary, like her predecessors, has been fostering a hostile environment for migration; and indeed even for those of the Windrush generation who thought themselves well-settled in the UK. It is no great surprise that Ukrainians encounter the same sort of attitudes so many others have encountered in the past.

It has hardly been one of Ms Patel's finest hours, and the longer she spends in the post as home secretary, the more challenging parts of her brief are passed to other cabinet ministers. The Ukrainian crisis has been handed to Michael Gove, who may have a more compassionate approach - it would be difficult for him to be more flinty than Ms Patel. She cannot be indulged by Boris Johnson for much longer.

The prime minister has a formulation he likes to use about this refugee crisis which is that the government is doing "as much as it can". This actually means as much as its backbenchers and reactionary elements in the grassroots will allow him to. The ones who see Putin's assassins in the buggy of every Ukrainian child refugee, and a wannabe welfare scrounger pushing it. This time, though, public opinion, including among Tory voters, is very much in favour of helping the homeless Ukrainians, and that shift in opinion is starting to be reflected in some of the more sensitive parts of the parliamentary Conservative Party.

No doubt Mr Gove will be offering a more humane face to the policy than Ms Patel has done. But it is all about the numbers. Mr Johnson says hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians will be helped to Britain soon. We shall see.

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Patel refuses to waive visa rules for fleeing Ukrainians because of 'security advice'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WP-T8T1-JCS0-D1SS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 1, 2022 Tuesday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 8

**Length:** 481 words

**Byline:** ROB MERRICK DEPUTY POLITICAL EDITOR

**Body**

Priti Patel has refused to copy the EU by waiving visa rules for refugees fleeing Ukraine, insisting it would undermine "the strongest security advice".

A fellow cabinet minister had hinted a rethink was on the way - after strict limits even on bringing in the family members of Ukrainians already in the UK were attacked as "shameful".

But the home secretary ruled out waiving visas, telling MPs: "The approach we are taking is based on the strongest security advice."

It comes as The Independent 's Refugees Welcome campaign calls on the government to set up a resettlement scheme to give Ukrainians fleeing the invasion sanctuary in Britain.

It is urging the government to follow countries such as Ireland and Portugal, which have already said that they will accept ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** without requiring visas.

Ms Patel claimed up to 100,000 Ukrainians could still come to the UK - even though only the partners, children or sick relatives of those already here will be admitted.

The hardline stance drew strong criticism in the Commons - as well as bewilderment over what Ms Patel was announcing in highly confusing comments.

At one point, the home secretary described a "new humanitarian route", but appeared to be ruling out any further help beyond the very tightly limited rules for some family members.

Earlier, the EU revealed it is granting asylum for up to three years, without the need for an asylum application - as hundreds of thousands of desperate people cross Ukraine's borders.

Ben Wallace, the defence secretary, hinted similar UK action would follow and Boris Johnson's spokesperson told journalists: "There will be further support, as you would expect, for those who are fleeing the violence."

Senior Conservatives have written to the prime minister, demanding "decisive" action, including ex-ministers Jeremy Hunt, Robert Buckland, Greg Clark, Damian Green and Caroline Nokes.

And public opinion opposes the government's block on refugees, some 77 per cent telling YouGov they back allowing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to come to the UK without a visa.

The government has been under fire since the immigration minister Kevin Foster suggested, on Saturday, that escaping Ukrainians could apply to be seasonal fruit pickers in the UK.

He deleted a tweet and was disowned by Downing Street - but refused to apologise for the comment when urged to in the Commons.

Rejecting lifting visa rules, Ms Patel pointed to "what Putin's Russia is willing to do, even on our soil, as we saw through the Salisbury attack".

"Security and biometric checks are a fundamental part of our visa approval process worldwide and will continue, as they did for the evacuation of people from Afghanistan," she told MPs.

"That is vital to keep British citizens safe and to ensure that we are helping those in genuine need, particularly as Russian troops are now infiltrating Ukraine and merging into Ukrainian forces."

**Load-Date:** February 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine Take Shelter is giving hundreds of new homes to refugees. It was built by a 19-year-old Harvard student*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6504-BHJ1-DY4H-K0PD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 12, 2022 Saturday 3:42 PM GMT

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**Section:** AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1347 words

**Byline:** Rachel Sharp

**Highlight:** EXCLUSIVE : EXCLUSIVE: Ukraine Take Shelter allows refugees to connect with people from across the globe who can offer them temporary shelter after they were forced to flee their homes. It's 19-year-old founder speaks to Rachel Sharp

**Body**

A [*Harvard*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/harvard) University student is matching ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) fleeing their homes in the war-torn nation with people offering spare rooms or a couch to sleep on in their homes all around the world.

Avi Schiffmann, a 19-year-old neurophilosophy student, told The Independent that he launched the website Ukraine Take Shelter to help the more than two million Ukrainians who have so far escaped from [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's attack as they desperately try to find temporary places to stay.

"I realised that the tools out there to help refugees find places to stay were really sub-par," he said.

"Many of these refugees are escaping on foot amid explosions and shelling. They are stressed and confused and scared and they are in new countries where they don't understand the language.

"And then they are just expected to go onto a government website that is full of jargon and nonsense and wait to be matched with somewhere to stay."

[*Follow live updates on Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-news-russia-war-putin-b2033928.html)

In the two weeks since Russia declared war, people from countries across the world have rallied in support of the Ukrainian people, donating items and sending funds.

Many have offered to take refugees into their homes but accounts on social media have revealed frustrations with their abilities to turn these offers into realities.

In the week since Ukraine Take Shelter launched, thousands of people from "almost every country on the planet" have now posted listings offering entire homes, annexes, rooms and even couches in their houses for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to stay.

As of Friday morning, there were 5,000 active listings on the website -not including an estimated 300 that hosts have taken down after their spaces have been filled, Mr Schiffmann said.

"For example, there were dozens of places in Hungary last night but by this morning there was almost none left," he said.

Many of the listings are in European countries close to Ukraine but offers have also come from hosts as far away as Israel, Canada and the US -as some refugees try to travel to countries where they have close ties.

"People are offering everything from a couch in their apartment for one person to an entire farm that can fit five families," he said.

"If you have an extra couch in your home in a small village in Hungary, you can hop on the website and post a listing and then refugees can contact you."

A quick search on the website on Friday morning revealed the likes of a long-term listing offering a three-bedroom home in downtown Ottawa for a family with children and a room for two people in Poland.

For people who don't have space to take in fleeing refugees, Mr Schiffmann said there are other offers flooding in such as help with transportation or offers to take in refugees' pets.

One listing from a host in Kraków, Poland, online on Friday said they were willing to pay for an Airbnb for a refugee.

Meanwhile, a host in Prague was offering temporary foster care for up to two cats including vet bills and pet food costs.

"It's kind of a Craigslist for refugees," said Mr Schiffmann.

"The thing about the site is that it puts the power back into the hands of refugees -they can see the listings and pick from them rather than waiting around to be matched by a nonprofit or a government.

"They already feel powerless -now they can use their own initiative and go to the site and find a listing for themselves."

Since its launch, Mr Schiffmann said he has heard from both refugees and hosts who have connected through the website.

One heartwrenching message he shared with The Independent read: "Once again thank you for making that website, if it weren't for your website. He was losing hope to return alive."

He said: "A lot of people don't want to leave Ukraine if they don't know that they can get stable housing over the border.

"People are afraid for their lives but they are also afraid what will happen if they don't have any plans in place."

The teenager said that he came up with the idea a few days into the war when he began thinking of ways he could help Ukrainians from where he lives in the US.

He said he attended a protest against Russia's attack with a friend in San Diego and felt like it "wasn't really helping".

"I went with a friend to a protest in solidarity with Ukraine in Balboa Park where people were holding up signs reading 'Stop Putin' and Ukrainian flags," he said.

"And I thought that's great for the few hundred people there in San Diego but I thought 'it's not really doing anything'.

"It's just a bit of a show really that looks great on Instagram but isn't really helping the people in Ukraine."

The teenager decided that there had to be something more practical that he could do to help.

That night -28 February -he started researching and noticed that there was a challenge that could easily be solved.

He sent a tweet to his 54,000 followers: "A cool idea would be to set up a website to match ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to hosts in neighboring countries."

He got into bed and noticed his tweet gaining more and more traction.

"I thought 'yeh okay, I'm the perfect person to do it'. And so I jumped out of bed and got started," he said.

He contacted his friend and Harvard University computer sciences student Marco Burstein and they spent the next three days working around the clock until the website went live.

"We didn't sleep for three days, we just got it up as fast as possible," he said.

The 19-year-old already had a large public platform after he hit headlines for launching a website during the pandemic that tracked Covid-19 cases.

So he sought the help of this online community for expertise in the likes of cyber security and language translation.

"Anything I needed help with such as translations into Romanian I would tweet out and within moments, people reached out to help," he said.

The result is a user-friendly website that is entirely created by volunteers and is currently accessible in 12 different languages including Ukrainian, Russian and Polish.

People with space to welcome a refugee into their home can simply post a listing on the website.

A refugee then uses the simple search function to search for shelter in a specific area and the website shows them all the places nearby and what the hosts are offering.

The refugee can then contact a host directly through the contact details listed.

Amid concerns for the safety of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** as well as for hosts who are taking a stand against Russian aggression, it was important to make the website as secure as possible.

Neither the host nor the refugee share their exact locations on the site and refugees don't even need to make an account.

Email addresses are not shared on the website as people often use their first name and last name so can be more easily identified, Mr Schiffmann explained.

The student said that he was surprised that Western governments hadn't already set up something like his website for the millions fleeing from Ukraine.

"Lots of governments are trying to do what they can but -like with the Covid website -I don't understand how a 19-year-old with no design experience can be faster and create a more accessible website than the government of the most powerful country in the whole world," he said.

"And not just governments but also NGOs and nonprofits."

Mr Schiffmann said the site is now also being used by humanitarian aid groups on the ground with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and he is now working closely with some groups around improving the site further.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainians in Romania help new refugee arrivals*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65BS-7BK1-JBNF-W074-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 1, 2022 Sunday 8:01 AM GMT

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**Length:** 489 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Elena Trofimchuk fled Ukraine to Romania more than a month ago

**Body**

Elena Trofimchuk fled [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) to Romania more than a month ago. She now sees Bucharest's North Railway Station as a second home.

She doesn't live there, but it's where she spends most of her day welcoming fellow ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** escaping from Russia's war and helping them sort out tickets, accommodation and onward destinations.

The 26-year-old said that keeping herself busy and useful keeps her from dwelling on Russia's shelling of her hometown, Odesa, where many of her friends remain.

"If you sit and do nothing, you can just become crazy because you're always searching for news. It's very hard. So here I can help people buy tickets and find accommodations. I even help Romanians in the kitchen," Trofimchuk said.

Before the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, she worked as a photographer.

Trofimchuk is just one of many orange-vested Ukrainian volunteers working at the station.

Ukrainian volunteer Vitalii Ivanchuk flew all the way from [*Sri Lanka*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sri-lanka) where he lived with his Ukrainian girlfriend to help refugees coming into Romania.

The 29-year-old IT developer said that many Ukrainians have a tough time communicating with Romanians, and volunteers who can speak both Ukrainian and English are in high demand.

His girlfriend, Anastasiia Haiduk, quit her investment job shortly after the war started and decided to volunteer at the station until the war ends and she can be reunited with her family in Ukraine.

The Romanian government is currently giving away free train tickets to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving in Romania that they can use to travel on to Hungary, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Slovakia and Bulgaria.

Trofimchuk said she was moved by the warm welcome and the Romanians' show of solidarity with Ukraine.

"Every Romanian person wants to help. They're very friendly. And I was shocked about this. I'm so happy that everyone wants to help," Trofimchuk said.

Nearly 5.5 million people have fled Ukraine since the start of Russia's war on Feb. 24, according to data from the U.N. refugee agency.

Most have entered countries on Ukraine's western border: more than 3 million people have fled to Poland, while more than 817,000 others have fled to Romania and around 520,000 have crossed into Hungary, UNHCR statistics show.

For some Ukrainian volunteers, their Saturday evening ritual is to join a weekly demonstration at the Russian Embassy in [*Bucharest*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bucharest) along with Ukrainian residents and Romanians.

Station volunteers in Bucharest say they are now seeing an increasing number of arrivals from Odesa following Russian missile attacks on the southern Ukrainian port city on the Black Sea coast.

But Trofimchuk skipped a recent protest, saying she expected people to arrive from her hometown.

"I will stay at the station as late as I can because there might be people who need my help," Trofimchuk said.

\_\_\_

More [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) coverage of the war at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine) and migration issues at [*https://apnews.com/hub/migration*](https://apnews.com/hub/migration)

**Load-Date:** May 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Biden announces additional $800m arms package and $500m in 'direct economic assistance' for Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:658N-1M11-DY4H-K2BJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 21, 2022 Thursday 3:17 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:3

**Length:** 470 words

**Byline:** Andrew Feinberg

**Highlight:** US president is also banning Russian ships from American ports

**Body**

President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) on Thursday said the US will send an additional $800m in defence assistance and $500m in "direct economic assistance" to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and stand up a new program to speed entry of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** into the United States.

Mr Biden said the newest aid packages bring the total amount sent to Kyiv this month alone to more than a billion dollars, and credited the defence assistance provided by the US and EU with helping Ukrainian forces fend off [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's invasion over the last two months.

"This is money the government can help us to stabilize their economy, to support communities that have been devastated by the Russian onslaught, and pay the brave workers that continue to provide essential services to the people of Ukraine," he said.

"Every American taxpayer, every member of our armed forces can be proud of the fact that our country's generosity and the skill and service of our military helped to ... repel Russia's aggression in Ukraine, to beat back Putin's savagery ... and wipe out Ukraine's government," Mr Biden continued, calling the "Battle of Kyiv" a "historic victory for the Ukrainians" won with "unprecedented assistance by the United States and our allies and our partners".

"Now we have to accelerate that assistance package to help prepare Ukraine for Russia's offensive that's going to be more limited in terms of geography, but not in terms of brutality," he said.

Mr Biden said the US aid would be sent "directly" to what he described as "the frontlines of freedom" - to be put in the hands of the "fearless and skilled Ukrainian fighters" who have been "standing in the breach" against Mr Putin's forces.

But the president warned that his authority to direct arms and aid to Ukrainian forces is quickly butting up against the upper limits of the appropriations bill he signed into law last month.

He said he will be asking Congress to approve a supplemental budget request he will be sending "to keep weapons and ammunition flowing without interruption".

"My expectation is Congress would move and act quickly," he said.

Additionally, Mr Biden announced the US will establish a new "humanitarian parole" programme to complement "existing legal pathways" for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, enabling refugees to come directly from Europe to the US and avoid having to present themselves for asylum at the US-Mexico border, and said he was signing an order prohibiting Russian-affiliated ships from US ports.

"No ship that sails under the Russian flag, or that is owned or operated by Russian interests will be allowed to dock in a United States port or access our shores - none," he said, adding that the ban was "another critical step" taken "in concert" with US allies in the UK, Canada, and EU "to deny Russia the benefits of international economic system that they so enjoyed in the past".

**Load-Date:** April 21, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Some refugees returned to Ukraine due to visa delays , claims Holyrood minister*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:658F-D591-DY4H-K0N9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 20, 2022 Wednesday 4:50 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 473 words

**Byline:** Neil Pooran

**Highlight:** Neil Gray repeated his criticism of the time it takes for visas to be approved under the UK Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme.

**Body**

There is anecdotal evidence some refugees have had to return to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) due to the delays they have experienced in the UK immigration system, a [*Scottish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scottish) Government minister has said.

Neil Gray, the minister with special responsibility for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving in Scotland, said the war shows little sign of abating and more than five million people have now fled the country.

He updated MSPs on the situation on Wednesday, repeating his criticism of the UK Government's speed in approving visas under the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine scheme.

He denied that the Scottish Government's super sponsor scheme slowed down the application process.

Mr Gray also announced £41,000 for a new support centre to help Ukrainian agricultural workers in Scotland.

Scottish Labour MSP Sarah Boyack asked him about dedicated support for people who had experienced trauma.

She said: "I've heard of families who've had to return to Ukraine because of their underlying health conditions not being supported as they attempt to travel to safety, waiting for visa clearance.

"And of women and children becoming victims of sexual violence from invading soldiers, or being put at risk of sexual abuse in their lengthy and uncertain journeys while waiting for their visas to be approved."

Mr Gray responded: "We've received anecdotal evidence as well, around people either returning to Ukraine or choosing other options because of the delays in the immigration system operated by the [*UK Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk-government).

"We're extremely concerned by that, which is why we have used every tool in our box to put as much pressure on and work with the UK Government to try to unblock some of the delays and processing of visas."

Earlier, Scottish Conservative MSP Donald Cameron said his party supports the Scottish and UK governments working together to help refugees.

He referred to the latest published data on the Homes for Ukraine scheme, which showed 570 visas have been issued under the Scottish Government's super sponsor scheme for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.Mr Cameron said: "I note from the minister's statement that in Scotland, almost twice as many visas have been issued to private individuals as opposed to visas under the super sponsor.

"In light of that, can I ask him to comment on anecdotal reports that when potential sponsors select the [*Scottish Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scottish-government) as a super sponsor, this has the effect of actually slowing down the process, because it doesn't count as an actual application?

"And if that is true, what actions is the Scottish Government going to take to address it?"

Mr Gray said the latest published data was likely to be out of date already and new figures were expected this week.

He said: "I've no evidence to suggest that the super sponsor route in itself is a blockage, other than the visa system operated by the Home Office has been the issue that has slowed matters down."

**Load-Date:** April 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Pope heads to Malta; Migration, Ukraine war top his agenda*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:654D-FFB1-DY4H-K1F7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 1, 2022 Friday 7:52 PM GMT

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**Length:** 477 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Pope Francis is going to Malta this weekend, aiming to draw attention to Europe's migration challenge that has only become more stark with the war in Ukraine

**Body**

[*Pope Francis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/pope-francis) heads to the [*Mediterranean*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mediterranean) island nation of [*Malta*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/malta) on Saturday for a pandemic-delayed weekend visit, aiming to draw attention to Europe's migration challenge has only become more stark with Russia's invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Francis is likely to encourage Europe's embrace of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** while also urging countries to extend the same welcome to migrants coming from Libya and elsewhere.

Malta, the European Union's smallest country with a half-million people, has long been on the front lines of the flow of migrants and refugees across the Mediterranean. It has frequently called upon its bigger European neighbors to shoulder more of the burden receiving would-be refugees.

Francis has frequently echoed that call, and will certainly link it this weekend to the welcome the Maltese once gave the Apostle Paul, who according to the biblical account, was shipwrecked off Malta in around A.D. 60 while en route to Rome and was shown unusual kindness by the islanders.

The Vatican secretary of state, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, said migration will top the agenda for Francis' trip and said Europe's reception of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** was "truly admirable."

"I hope that this tragic experience can also really help to grow, to increase sensitivity also towards the other migration, the one that comes from the south," he told Vatican Media.

Although short, the two-day visit could be challenging for the 85-year-old Francis, who has had increasing trouble walking due to an inflamed ligament in his right knee. He has struggled in recent days to stand up from his chair and climb stairs, and his limping gait from sciatica has appeared more pronounced.

Aside from getting on and off his plane, Francis is due to board a catamaran Saturday afternoon for a sailing trip to the island of Gozo, and on Sunday plans to descend the steps into the Grotto of St. Paul in Rabat.

Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni has said no extra mobility measures were being taken beyond the norm.

Francis had been due to visit Malta in May 2020, but postponed the visit after the coronavirus pandemic hit. The rescheduled trip comes as the Catholic Church in the overwhelmingly Catholic country is preparing for its first in-person Easter Week celebrations in two years.

Maltese Archbishop Charles Scicluna, who is also a top Vatican official, asked for prayers for the visit, not least because of Francis' catamaran trip Saturday.

"That should be lovely if he has the right weather for it, but the last two weekends before the pope's trip have been an unmitigated disaster weather-wise," Scicluna told The Associated Press. "So we pray for something we cannot organize ... the weather."

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Associated Press religion coverage receives support through the AP's collaboration with The Conversation US, with funding from Lilly Endowment Inc. The [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) is solely responsible for this content.

**Load-Date:** April 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Poland-Ukraine ties seen as target of Russian disinformation*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6568-VCG1-JBNF-W1BC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 10, 2022 Sunday 7:56 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1248 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Polish and Ukrainian authorities have for years accused Russia of trying to provoke hostility between their neighboring nations as part of a broader effort to divide and destabilize the West

**Body**

Days before Poland's Independence Day in November, vandals painted the blue-and-yellow colors of the Ukrainian flag on monuments in [*Krakow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/krakow). The vandalism, which took place as Russia massed troops near Ukraine's border, looked as if Ukrainians were defacing memorials to Polish national heroes.

Yet some clues suggested otherwise.

The flag's colors were reversed, with the yellow on top of the blue and one offensive message was in an unnatural mix of Russian and Ukrainian. Though prosecutors are still investigating, Polish and Ukrainian authorities believe it was most likely a Russian-inspired attempt to trigger ethnic hostility between Ukrainians and Poles.

Polish and Ukrainian authorities have for years accused Russia of trying to provoke hostility between their neighboring nations as part of a broader effort to divide and destabilize the West - and the concerns have gained greater urgency since Russia invaded Ukraine.

Poland and Ukraine are neighbors and allies but they share a difficult history of oppression and bloodshed, and those historical traumas sometimes rise to the surface.

Poland has also accepted large numbers of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, creating fears that could become another wedge issue that Russia could exploit.

"The Russian efforts to sow divisions between the Poles and Ukrainians, particularly by means of exploiting historical issues, are as old as time," said Stanislaw Zaryn, the spokesman for Poland's security services.

"Russia has redoubled them since the war began," he said. "And they are more dangerous now because the war is going on and it can affect more people than before."

Reacting to the November incident, the Ukrainian Embassy in [*Warsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warsaw) immediately denounced it as "shameful" and "a provocation aimed at harming the good neighborly relations between Ukraine and Poland."

More than 2.5 million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have arrived in Poland since the war began, and while some move on to other countries more than half have remained. Poles have reacted with an outpouring of help and goodwill and the government has extended to the Ukrainians the same rights to education and health care that Poles have.

Never Again, an anti-racism association in Poland, has documented several attempts to stoke aversion to the ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and even to openly justify Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion. In some cases those behind the messages are far-right Polish activists or politicians with pro-Kremlin views, according to a report the organization published Thursday.

"These groups do not enjoy widespread public support, but they do their best to make Poles and Ukrainians quarrel, spread hateful content, conspiracy theories and false information, primarily in the internet space," it said.

Larysa Lacko, an expert on countering disinformation at NATO, said Russia is known to exploit refugees as a wedge issue because it touches on the economy, race and other sensitive issues, and that she has also observed Russian "disinformation talking about historical grievances."

Western Ukraine was once under Polish rule, with Ukrainians largely subservient to a Polish landowning class.

Resentments erupted in ethnic bloodshed during World War II, when the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, a nationalist military formation, slaughtered tens of thousands of Poles in the Nazi-occupied Polish regions of Volhynia and Eastern Galicia.

Poland also has a difficult history with [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow). Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union carved up Poland at the start of World War II in 1939, invading and occupying the country based on a secret clause in the notorious Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. Poles suffered atrocities inflicted by both occupying states. The Nazis set up death camps and concentration camps where they murdered Jews and they killed many other Polish citizens as well. Meanwhile, the Soviets sent some Poles to Siberia and murdered 22,000 Polish officers in the Katyn massacres of 1940.

Even after the war, Poland was forced to live under Moscow's oppressive control for the decades of the Cold War.

It still stings Poles to remember the Soviet Union denied the truth of the Katyn killings for decades, forbidding Poles from publicly commemorating the victims. When the Polish wartime government-in-exile asked the International Red Cross to investigate the Nazi disclosures of the Soviet crimes, Moscow smeared the Polish leaders as "Fascist collaborators" - much as they have falsely accused Ukraine today of being a Nazi state.

Some Poles, especially those who lived through the war, remember those times and carry a lingering hostility to both Russians and Ukrainians.

One false claim Polish authorities say Russians are spreading is that Poland seeks to reclaim Lviv and other territory in western Ukraine that once was Polish. "Those claims are untrue," the Polish Foreign Ministry said in a series of tweets seeking to debunk false claims. "Poland will never accept the annexation of any territory belonging to an independent state."

Another is that Poland, a NATO ally hosting thousands of U.S. troops, is working to set the West against Russia.

That claim was made recently by former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev, the current deputy chairman of the Russian security council.

"Now the interests of the citizens of Poland have been sacrificed due to the Russophobia of mediocre politicians and their puppeteers from across the ocean with clear signs of senile insanity," Medvedev wrote recently on Telegram, a social media app popular in Russia and Ukraine.

Zaryn, the Polish security services spokesman, also pointed to a Polish Facebook page called "A Ukrainian is NOT my brother," whose posts call on followers not to forget the Ukrainian massacres of Poles in the 1940s.

The page was created less than a month after Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014 and has nearly 55,000 followers. In recent weeks posts have criticized Polish authorities for their strong support for Ukraine.

Zaryn said evidence points to it being run by a woman with ties to a pro-Kremlin party, Zmiana, in Poland. The former leader of the party, Mateusz Piskorski, has worked for Russian news outlets RT and Sputnik and has been charged with espionage for Russia and China.

Poland's government has been taking steps to protect itself, with public warnings about the disinformation attempts and expulsions of dozens of suspected Russian agents and one arrest.

Days after Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, Polish authorities arrested a man they accused of being an agent of the Russian military intelligence agency, GRU, in Przemysl, a key entry points for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, as he sought to cross into Ukraine.

In late March, Poland ordered the expulsion of 45 suspected Russian intelligence officers they accused of using diplomatic status as a cover to operate in the country.

"The illegal activities of these diplomats can also pose a threat to those people who left their country to flee the war and found protection in our country," Foreign Ministry spokesman Lukasz Jasina said.

At a moment of huge solidarity in Poland and elsewhere with Ukrainians, disinformation is limited in its impact, argued Lacko, the NATO expert working to counter disinformation.

"Given the atrocities on the ground, it's harder to fall into these sorts of traps," she said.

But officials in Poland say they have to remain on guard, especially if the number of refugees grows, creating the potential for more social anxieties that can be exploited.

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Frank Jordans in Berlin contributed.

**Load-Date:** April 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Palestinians should be offered similar visa schemes to Ukrainians – Labour MP*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BKG-TRX1-DY4H-K181-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 19, 2024 Tuesday 2:43 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 451 words

**Byline:** Rhiannon James

**Highlight:** Andy Slaughter said Palestinians should be able to join their relatives in the UK or be hosted by families who wish to give them refuge.

**Body**

[*Palestinians*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/palestinians) fleeing the war in Gaza should be offered the same support and visa schemes as ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, a [*Labour*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/labour) MP told the Commons.

Andy Slaughter said Palestinians should be able to join their relatives in the UK or be hosted by families who wish to give them refuge.

[*Foreign Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/foreign-office) minister [*Andrew Mitchell*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/andrew-mitchell) said the two situations are “very different”.

Every month I am asked why there are not similar visa schemes to allow Palestinians to join their relatives in the UK or be hosted by families who wish to give them refuge

Andy Slaughter MP

Fleeing Ukrainians were offered visas which granted three years leave in the UK under programmes such as Homes for Ukraine, the Ukraine Family Scheme and the Ukraine Extension Scheme, but these are set to expire in March 2025.

The MP for Hammersmith said: “Every month in Hammersmith we hold Ukrainian open house to bring together all those supporting Ukrainian families who have fled that war.

“And every month I am asked why there are not similar visa schemes to allow Palestinians to join their relatives in the UK or be hosted by families who wish to give them refuge.

“What’s the Government’s answer to that?”

Mr Mitchell replied: “The two positions are not analogous, and are very, very different.

“But he will know… that we are doing everything we can to help individual cases in both instances and we will continue to do so.”

With people dying from imminent famine in Gaza, with Palestinians being killed trying to get flour to feed their families, the international community holds a degree of responsibility for failing to stop this

Afzal Khan MP

Elsewhere in the debate, Labour MP Afzal Khan called on the Government to increase funding to the United Nation’s Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) which is supporting Palestinian refugees.

Mr Khan, who represents Manchester Gorton, said: “Canada, Australia, Sweden, the EU have now confirmed that they have restored the funding to [*UNRWA*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/unrwa) , refuting Israel’s position that 450 members of the agency staff had participated in the 7th of October attack.

“With people dying from imminent famine in Gaza, with Palestinians being killed trying to get flour to feed their families, the international community holds a degree of responsibility for failing to stop this.

“In light of the catastrophic situation in Gaza, will the minister commit to restarting and increasing its funding to UNRWA as a matter of urgency?”

Mr Mitchell said: “We have already increased funding significantly, including to UNRWA.

“He will know that Britain is not at the moment in a position of having to make a decision because we have fully funded what we said we would do and are not due to provide any further money until the end of April.”

**Load-Date:** March 19, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Website crashes as 122,000 register to house refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650X-P4N1-F072-4092-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 16, 2022 Wednesday

Second Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 8

**Length:** 476 words

**Byline:** JOE MIDDLETON

**Body**

More than 122,000 individuals and organisations in the UK have now offered to provide a home for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, just a day after the website went live.

By 9am yesterday, 88,712 households had registered for the Homes for Ukraine scheme, which allows members of the public to host refugees for a minimum of six months in exchange for a monthly £350 payment.

Just hours later, Boris Johnson confirmed more than 100,000 people and organisations "have recorded their interest in supporting Ukrainians fleeing the war through the Homes for Ukraine scheme".

"Thank you to everyone across the country who has stepped up to offer their help so far," the prime minister wrote on Twitter.

By last night, 122,305 people or organisations had come forward to offer help.

The website stopped working for a short while after the scheme opened on Monday afternoon due to the surge of interest, but foreign office minister James Cleverly said he was "glad the website crashed, because it is a reflection of the generosity of the British people".

"The irony of this is I'm actually quite proud that the system struggled," Mr Cleverly told LBC. "We built it quickly. We could have, yes... we could have spent more time stress-testing this website and delayed it a couple of days before launching.

"But, frankly, I'm glad we moved quickly on this and we're moving quickly to ensure we're able to help the ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***."

The scheme has attracted criticism from refugee charities, who have said the fact households need to have the name of a refugee in order to take part risks "excluding vulnerable people seeking refuge".

However, Mr Cleverly defended the new proposals on BBC Radio 4's Today programme saying: "There are charities, faith groups, who are already in contact with people in Ukraine, people that need help and support.

"So, actually, rather than introduce a potentially slow and bureaucratic process, where people have already got connections - and there are a huge number of people and organisations that have already got connections with Ukrainians - rather than replicate, duplicate and slow that down, we want to be as agile and as quick as possible.

"That's why we're saying that, you know, we've got organisations which are already in contact with Ukrainians. We've now set up this site so British people can register their willingness to help and support.

"And, actually, what we're looking to do is connect those both ends of that system together and do so in a way that's quick and efficient."

Asked whether he will be taking part in the scheme, he told LBC: "I have genuinely considered this. I've discussed this with my wife.

"I don't know whether our personal circumstances will allow us to do this right at the moment. As you know, Nick, my wife, she's going through medical treatment at the moment, but it's absolutely something that I'm considering."

**Load-Date:** March 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Germany, EU push to curb migration via Balkan route*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66NF-WFT1-JBNF-W46X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

October 20, 2022 Thursday 4:27 PM GMT

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**Length:** 635 words

**Byline:** Kirsten Grieshaber

**Highlight:** Germany has hosted a meeting with representatives of several European countries — including the western Balkans — in an effort to curb migration via the so-called Balkan route

**Body**

[*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) on Thursday hosted a meeting with representatives of the European Union and several European countries — including from the western Balkans — in an effort to curb migration via the so-called Balkan route.

“We want to protect the people who flee to us from war and political persecution," German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser said. "At the same time, we also take decisive action against irregular migration ... our declared goal is to reduce the rising irregular migration via the western Balkans route.”

In recent months, an increasing number of migrants have been trying to reach wealthier western European countries via the Balkans, often paying smugglers thousands of euros (dollars) to take them across borders without valid travel documents.

The package of measures that western European and EU officials pushed for at the [*Berlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/berlin) meeting include aligning the visa policies of western Balkan states [*Serbia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/serbia) , Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro and North Macedonia — all of which want to join the 27-nation bloc — with EU standards, combating trafficking of migrants, ensuring effective border protection and speeding up deportations.

Especially Serbia has been pressured by EU countries to restrict its lax entry policies and no longer allow visa-free travel for citizens from India, Tunisia, Morocco and elsewhere. These people often use Serbia as a loophole to enter the continent and continue from there to the west.

While Germany has welcomed more than 1 million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** — mostly women and children — who entered legally since [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) attacked the eastern European country on Feb. 24, the government has recently struck a much more hostile tone regarding migrants from more distant parts of the world.

By the end of September, Germany’s federal police had registered almost 58,000 unauthorized entries at the country’s borders — mostly in the east, where the Balkan route ends. According to preliminary figures, there were 12,720 cases in September alone, more than twice as many as a year earlier, dpa reported.

Austria, the Czech Republic and other central European countries have also reported increased entries of migrants and asylum seekers.

Almost 135,000 people had applied for asylum in Germany in 2022 by the end of September. That is around a third more than in the same period last year, according to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. However, it’s still a far call from 2015-16, when more than 1 million migrants, mostly from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan applied for asylum in Germany.

The figures for asylum applications in 2022 are much lower than the total number of refugees because Ukrainians can enter Germany without a visa and do not need to apply for asylum.

Migration expert Gerald Knaus expressed doubt whether officials' attempts to prevent migration to the EU via the Balkans would curb the current influx.

“Closing the Balkans route has never worked so far,” Knaus told newspaper group RND, adding that “the pressure currently comes not from illegal migration, but from legal migration. Nine out of ten refugees come from Ukraine."

German cities and communities have recently expressed concern about the difficult housing situation of refugees and have demanded help from the federal government. More ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are expected to arrive in Germany as winter approaches and Russia's attacks on Ukraine are becoming increasingly brutal.

A small but vocal far-right minority has also tried to use the refugees as scapegoats for the rising food and energy prices that are linked to Russia's war on Ukraine.

On Wednesday, a refugee shelter for Ukrainians was burnt down on Germany's Baltic Coast and investigators said they're looking into politically motivated arson.

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Follow all [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) stories on migration at [*https://apnews.com/hub/migration*](https://apnews.com/hub/migration)

**Load-Date:** October 20, 2022

**End of Document**