



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

GUIDANCE

Homes for Ukraine: eligible minors visa schemes

Advice for local authorities on the eligible minors visa schemes and processes for children outside of the schemes

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Background

On 22 June 2022, the UK Government **announced** the introduction of a new Homes for Ukraine Scheme visa route to permit entry to the UK for children who are not travelling with or joining their parent(s) or legal guardian. They may be travelling with or joining an adult relative, or they may be travelling wholly unaccompanied, and they will be joining a sponsor.

On-hold visa scheme

On 15 July 2022, the UK Government published **guidance for local authorities** in the four nations of the UK in relation to processing Homes for Ukraine visa applications made when there was no visa route for wholly unaccompanied children or children wishing to travel with an adult relative who is not their parent or legal guardian. Further guidance and information published by the UK Government and relevant to this visa route includes guidance for parents and legal guardians, a sponsorship arrangement suitability consent form and guidance for sponsors. Welsh Government circulated supplementary guidance to accompany this guidance which highlighted some Wales-specific areas not included in the UK Government guidance. Please email Ukraine.safeguarding@gov.wales for a copy of this guidance.

Process 1

This visa scheme process relating to the roles of UK Government, Welsh Government and local authorities, is set out below.

Completed Ukraine notarized consent forms and UK Government sponsorship arrangement suitability consent forms received by Welsh Government will be

shared with the relevant local authorities via a secure workspace in Objective Connect. Local authorities will use this information to commence the local checks as set out in [guidance](#).

There is an important change in this process from that which has been in place since August 2022. This is at step 8: local authorities must email Welsh Government's Ukraine.safeguarding@gov.wales only. This process will be in place until 31 March 2023. Updated guidance related to this part of the process will follow in April.

1. Application made by child/parent into HfU visa application system. Applicant will have already identified a sponsor.
2. Application held until visa route for EMs introduced July 2022. Visa application paused until steps 3 to 8 below are completed.
3. UKG mailshot to held applicants (children/their parents) do you wish to proceed? If yes, parent(s) and sponsors complete [UKG parental/ sponsorship suitability consent form](#) and Ukraine notarized parental consent form and return to UKG.
4. UKG carries out security checks on the sponsor, members of the sponsor's household aged over 16 and likely visitors to the household aged over 16.
5. Consent forms sent by UKG via OC to WG data team.
6. Consent forms sent by WG data team via Foundry API to LAs where the sponsors live.
7. LAs carry out safeguarding checks including Enhanced DBS and property checks in line with [UKG guidance](#) and WGs supplementary guidance (email Ukraine.safeguarding@gov.wales for a copy) and assess consent forms.
8. Based on checks and assessment of consent forms, LA emails WG via Ukraine.Safeguarding@gov.wales summarising the outcome of the checks and stating the decision about whether or not to issue a EMs visa. The email header should read 'GWFxxxxxxxx, Welsh Government, LA Check Results, Date xx/xx/xxxx' or 'UANxxxx-xxxx-xxxx-xxxx, Welsh Government, LA Check Results, Date xx/xx/xxxx.' The email should be set out as follows:
Accommodation suitability check: pass/fail/Safeguarding suitability

check: pass/fail/Enhanced DBS: completed and passed/underway/Ukraine
notarized parental consent form: provided/not provided/UK Government
sponsorship arrangement consent form: provided/not provided

9. UKG issues visa/permission to travel letter to child/child and adult relative(s).
10. LAs to update the WG Ukraine Data Platform to indicate the child/child and adult relative(s) as an EM visa beneficiary.
11. Parent and sponsor to work with LA, a **safe travel plan** for the child/ children adult relative(s).
12. LAs to carry out immediate post-arrival visit and ongoing assurance checks in line with Welsh private fostering arrangements.
13. If the sponsor is unable or unwilling to continue hosting the child, the sponsor must notify the LA and work with it to make alternative sponsorship/ hosting arrangements or, if necessary, the LA must activate its looked after children duties.

If those duties are activated, the LA must notify the Ukrainian Embassy via consul_gb@mfa.gov.ua copied to Ukraine.safeguarding@gov.wales

Applications made to the Welsh Super Sponsor Scheme will be subject to assessment on an individual, case by case basis.

New applications ‘flow’ scheme

On 28 July 2022, the visa scheme was extended to invite new applications via the individual Homes for Ukraine scheme. The process for new ‘flow’ applications will be different to the on-hold visa scheme as it requires the potential sponsor to first undergo safeguarding and property checks before an eligible child can begin their visa application. The guidance issued on 15 July 2022 is amended to reflect this change. There is **guidance for local authorities**; **guidance for applicants and parents**; **guidance for sponsors**; and **caseworker guidance**.

This supplementary guidance sets out a series of Wales-specific expectations in addition to the main UK Government guidance. It should be read in conjunction with the latest version of the Welsh Government's [Homes for Ukraine guidance for local authorities](#) and [sponsors](#) and the latest versions of Homes for Ukraine guidance on the UK Government website.

Super sponsor scheme

The Welsh Super Sponsor Scheme is closed to new applications through this visa route.

Foundry

The Foundry data system is to be used by Welsh local authorities solely for the purposes of processing the new applications scheme. Foundry is interactive by design, requiring local authorities to notify UKVI when satisfactory checks have been completed, in order that a child/child and adult relative(s) receives their Eligible Minors visa and permission to travel.

We are working to provide a rolling programme of training in the use of Foundry. If you are interested in attending, please email Ukraine.safeguarding@gov.wales.

The Foundry landing page can be accessed via [Homes for Ukraine Homepage](#).

Registering as a new user is completed via [Register as a New User Homes for Ukraine Service Desk Service project](#).

Guidance on requesting access and access to data (this being different stages

and processes) can be found via [Homes for Ukraine How to Access Data](#).

UK Government administrators are also available to assist with queries relating to gaining access to Foundry: rcorry.ctr@palantir.com and Nicholas.Ditchburn@levellingup.gov.uk

Wales specific information

As stated, the UK Government guidance is broadly relevant to Wales, although it is drafted for local authorities in England. Consequently, there are variances in relation to legislation, checks and processes which differ in Wales. Some of these are outlined below and some of this will be useful in discussions with visa scheme beneficiaries.

Legislation and guidance

- References to Section 20, Children Act 1989 are to [Section 76\(1\) Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#), in Wales
- References to England's private fostering regulations are to [The Children \(Private Arrangements for Fostering\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2006 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#) and to [The Fostering Panels \(Establishment and Functions\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2018](#), in Wales
- [Welsh Government Wales Safeguarding Procedures](#) and the children's safeguarding [All Wales Practice Guides](#)
- Welsh Government guidance on [handling cross border child protection cases](#)
- Welsh Government guidance on [childcare and education from early years to work](#)
- Welsh Government guidance on [renting a home](#)
- Children and Families Across Borders provides [advice](#) to Welsh local

authorities on cross-border children and family cases under the 1996 Hague Convention. CFAB welcomes calls to its [advice line](#) in respect of any query relating to the Eligible Minors scheme

CFAB has also kindly agreed to support the scheme in Wales as follows:

- identity checks on Ukrainian children and related family members, via its Central Authority function
- verifying documents detailing who has parental responsibility for the children, via its Central Authority function
- pre-placement support for UK sponsors, in advance of Ukrainian child(ren) arrival, on understanding the trauma they may have experienced, basics of Ukrainian culture and how to identify and support children with mental, emotional or psychological support referrals
- wrap-around telephone support for sponsors and the individuals being hosted
- identification of family members overseas and support of planning and maintaining contact with family overseas

Approving sponsors in Wales

In addition to the UK Government guidance on approving sponsors, Welsh local authorities are required to complete Enhanced DBS checks on all members of a host sponsor household over the age of 16 regardless of whether the host is a relative or other known person. This is in line with the requirements of [The Fostering Panels \(Establishment and Functions\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2018](#) and is intended to provide an additional level of safeguarding into the approval process.

Sponsorship arrangement suitability assessment

The **sponsorship arrangement suitability assessment** section of the UK Government guidance provides context to some of the complexities to be considered before local authorities can decide to support or veto the sponsorship. Suitability assessments should be undertaken by registered social workers.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and associated Codes, Regulations and guidance, highlight the importance of creating and maintaining records, including plans relating to children. While the private fostering regulations provide the most appropriate legislative basis for sponsorships under this scheme, local authorities may utilise the frameworks as set out in Parts 3, 4 and 6 of the 2014 Act for all applications on the basis that children displaced from Ukraine and travelling without their parent or legal guardian are vulnerable. Therefore, they should be considered as children with needs for care and support or children with needs for support.

In relation to the 'known sponsor' requirement and local authorities' ability to exercise discretion in 'exceptional circumstances', we recommend that social workers take in to account the home location of the child. While Ukraine as a nation is at war, there are certain regions under constant or regular attack and more generally at risk. At the time of writing, the east (from Kharkiv, Luhansk, Donetsk and Dnipro in the northeast and east) and then westwards across the south (from Mariupol to Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv, Kherson and Odesa) are the areas where risks to life are greatest. The capital, Kyiv is also subject to regular bombardment.

An important element of the sponsorship arrangement suitability assessment is making arrangements for the child/child and adult relative(s) safe travel. A **safe travel plan template** is available and is designed to provide assurance to the sponsor, local authorities and to the travelling child.

The safe arrival of children is entirely dependent on them being immediately met and supported to their onward destination by their sponsor; and local authority representative, where this is considered appropriate. Confirmation of safe arrival should be made by the sponsor as soon as is practicable, and at least within 24 hours. Where this occurs outside business hours or over a weekend, local authorities should use existing procedures, for example by ensuring the sponsor has the contact details for the out of hours or duty children's social services.

Local authority representatives should visit the child and their sponsor in the home within 24 hours or as soon as possible after a weekend arrival.

Support post-arrival and ongoing checks

Children travelling via this route are likely to have experienced trauma as a result of their separation from their parent or legal guardian and from the impact of living in an environment experiencing war. Their individual needs and histories have also influenced their development. The capacity of sponsors to meet their young guest's needs will become clearer following their arrival and whether or not they are accompanied by an adult relative. This means that each arrangement will require differing forms and levels of support, guidance and advice.

Children have a statutory entitlement to advocacy via the 2014 Act. 'Active offer' advocacy can be offered to children who are not looked after but who may have needs for care and support (2014 Act, Parts 3 and 4) in line with the [Independent Professional Advocacy National Standards and Outcomes Framework for Children and Young People in Wales](#). Children in Wales do not currently have a system of Guardianship. It is essential then, if the child is to be afforded the same UNCRC rights as other children in Wales, that social workers make referrals to advocacy services and, if required, the advocate uses interpretation services.

Decision to take a child in to local authority care

Where local authorities consider that it is in the child's best interests to protect their wellbeing and provide accommodation for the child, this is likely to be under section 76(1) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Where any child arriving in Wales under this visa route becomes looked after, the local authority must make direct notification to the Ukrainian Embassy via consul_gb@mfa.gov.ua. The notification must also be copied to Welsh Government at Ukraine.safeguarding@gov.wales.

Where local authorities have determined a child needs to become looked after, UK Government is providing funding to support those placements and when they become care leavers.

We have also secured agreement from UK Government that the amount relating to children being taken in to care due to sponsorship breakdown, can also be paid if a social work assessment deems taking in to care to be in the best interests of the child.

Process 2

This visa scheme process relating to the roles of UK Government, Welsh Government and local authorities, is set out below:

1. Sponsor completes [online application form](#) to indicate they wish to sponsor a child/child and adult relative(s).
2. Parent(s) and sponsors complete [UKG parental/sponsorship suitability consent form](#) and Ukraine notarized parental consent form and return to UKG for uploading on to Foundry.
3. LAs carry out safeguarding checks including Enhanced DBS and property checks in line with [WG guidance](#) and [UKG guidance](#) and assess consent

forms on Foundry. If approved, the LA updates Foundry and provides a 'Sponsor Certification Code' (CERT) to the sponsor. If denied, the LA updates Foundry and UKG informs the sponsor of the decision and reasoning.

4. At the same time as 3. UKG carries out security checks on the sponsor, members of the sponsor's household aged over 16 and likely visitors to the household aged over 16. If denied, UKG updates Foundry of the outcome and informs the sponsor of the decision and reasoning. If approved, UKG updates Foundry of the outcome.
5. Child/child and adult relative(s) use CERT to complete the EMs **visa** application.
6. UKG issues visa/permission to travel letter to child/child and adult relative(s).
7. Parent and sponsor to work with LA, a **safe travel plan** for the child/child and adult relative(s).
8. Once processed through Foundry, LAs to update the WG Ukraine Data Platform to indicate the child/child and adult relative(s) as an EM visa beneficiary.
9. LAs to carry out immediate post-arrival visit and ongoing assurance checks in line with Welsh private fostering arrangements.
10. If the sponsor is unable or unwilling to continue hosting the child, the sponsor must notify the LA and work with it to make alternative sponsorship/hosting arrangements or, if necessary, the LA must activate its looked after children duties. If those duties are activated, the LA must notify the Ukrainian Embassy via **consul_gb@mfa.gov.ua** copied to **Ukraine.safeguarding@gov.wales**

Funding

A £10,500 monthly tariff is paid to local authorities where Eligible Minors are sponsored, and this will continue to be paid to 2023 to 2024. In addition, UK Government has increased its monthly thank you payment to Eligible Minors

sponsors. In the first year of the child's stay, the sponsor will be eligible for a thank you payment of £350 a month. In the second year of the child's stay this will rise to £500 a month. The level of thank you payment in the third year of the child's stay is being kept under review and will be confirmed at a later date.

Sponsors of children are expected to host for the whole three years of the child's permission to stay in the UK (or until they turn 18 and have been in the UK for at least 6 months, in line with the wider Homes for Ukraine scheme). Sponsors of children entitled to thank you payments for the full three years or until the child turns 18 (and is therefore no longer considered an 'Eligible Minor') and has been hosted for 24 months.

Further information about available financial support is [here](#).

Additional advice and support

Local authorities may find the following links useful:

- Welsh Government Sanctuary website: [Ukraine](#)
- [Children and Families Across Borders](#) and specific advice relating to [Ukraine](#)
- Children's Commissioner for Wales [resources](#) for adults supporting Ukrainian children
- Welsh Centre for International Affairs [resources](#) for discussion and action in support of Ukrainian children
- Barnardo's [Ukrainian support helpline](#)
- Barnardo's [Independent Child Trafficking Guardianship Service](#)
- Housing Justice Cymru Homes for [Ukraine host support](#)

Guidance in relation to children in Wales outside

of the Eligible Minors scheme

UK Government has published [guidance for local authorities](#) in relation to children left with sponsors when parent(s) return to Ukraine; children that arrived before the Eligible Minors visa route was introduced; and children that applied with parent(s) or adult relatives to come to the UK but then travelled and arrived alone. This guidance also applies in Wales. Your attention is drawn also to new guidance published by UK Government for [parents and adult relatives](#) and for [sponsors](#) in relation to local authorities requiring notification from parents and adult relatives of any intention to leave the children they travelled to Wales with, with sponsors. Also, for sponsors to inform the local authority if a child has been left with them. Local authorities must inform the parents and adult relatives of the risks and implications of this, particularly in relation to looked after children duties.

Process 3

This process relating to the roles of UK Government, Welsh Government and local authorities, is set out below. As with the new applications 'flow' scheme, local authorities need to use Foundry (copied to Welsh Government) in these circumstances:

1. LA notifies UKG via a reclassification flag on Foundry and WG via Ukraine.safeguarding@gov.wales of a child left with a sponsor.
2. LAs to follow [UKG guidance](#) including completion of the [UKG sponsorship arrangement consent form](#), carrying out safeguarding including Enhanced DBS checks and property checks and gaining assurance that the sponsor understands their role/different and enhanced duties in caring for an unaccompanied child.
3. Ukraine notarized parental consent is not required but every effort should be made by the LA to contact the parent(s). If contact cannot be made, LA to

contact consul_gb@mfa.gov.ua for assistance.

4. LAs to carry out ongoing assurance checks in line with Welsh private fostering arrangements.
5. If the sponsor is unable or unwilling to continue hosting the child, the sponsor must notify the LA and work with it to make alternative sponsorship/ hosting arrangements or, if necessary, the LA must activate its looked after children duties. If those duties are activated, the LA must notify the Ukrainian Embassy via consul_gb@mfa.gov.ua copied to Ukraine.safeguarding@gov.wales

It is planned that the WG Ukraine Data Platform will be updated to include a flag for local authorities to add to identify an individual as an unaccompanied child in each of these three Processes. We will notify you when this flag is online and provide updated process flowcharts.

Children moving to a different local authority

When an Eligible Minor or a child in Wales outside of the Eligible Minors scheme moves to a different local authority, the **Foundry system needs to be updated**.

Frequently asked questions

We have been contacted by local authorities for guidance in relation to the following operational scenarios:

Scenario: Homes for Ukraine Individual Scheme beneficiaries

A parent or adult relative leaves a child with a sponsor for a short period of time with the sponsor's permission. The parent or adult relative then returns for a short period before returning to Ukraine and asks the host to look after the child indefinitely. Does the visa status of the remaining child change?

Response

It is the responsibility of parents/adult relatives and sponsors to notify the local authority of the situation and to seek support.

The visa status does not change for a child that has entered through the main Homes for Ukraine scheme. The child stays on the same visa and still has 3 years leave to remain. Local authorities need to reclassify the case on the Welsh Government Ukraine Data Platform to indicate the child as an unaccompanied minor. Local authorities are also expected to carry out safeguarding checks retrospectively.

Scenario: Homes for Ukraine Super Sponsor scheme beneficiaries

Due to safeguarding concerns, a parent/adult relative can no longer look after their child(ren) or due to frequent and/or lengthy parental/adult relative absences, a child is left alone in a Welcome Centre/Initial Accommodation. The child cannot stay unaccompanied in a Welcome Centre/Initial Accommodation but does need to be accommodated. Does the visa status of the child change?

Response

Welcome Centre/Initial Accommodation staff must be notified of the situation by the parent. Staff should first, work with the local authority, parent/adult relative and child to find alternative sponsor arrangements via Welsh Government's hosting arrangements. If a sponsor cannot be matched with this way, staff will need to work with the local authority to activate looked after children arrangements and identify suitable care and support (fostering or supported living depending on what is in the child's best interests).

The visa status does not change for a child that has entered through the main Homes for Ukraine scheme. The child stays on the same visa and still has three years leave to remain. Local authorities need to reclassify the case on the Welsh Government Ukraine Data Platform to indicate the child as an unaccompanied minor. Local authorities are also expected to carry out safeguarding checks retrospectively.

Scenario: Homes for Ukraine Individual Scheme beneficiaries and Homes for Ukraine Super Sponsor beneficiaries

An adult relative living in Wales wishes for a child relative to join them in Wales. That child is living either in Ukraine or in another European country where visas have been waived.

Responses

If the child is not travelling with or joining a parent or legal guardian in the UK then they would need to apply for an Eligible Minors visa and provide the relevant parental consent documents.

If the adult relative in the UK who they are coming to stay with is also the child's legal guardian (as evidenced by a court order) then they can apply for a main Homes for Ukraine scheme visa.

If the adult relative in the UK meets the relevant immigration/Leave to Remain criteria (e.g., has EU Settled Status and is not on a Homes for Ukraine visa), the child might be able to travel via the [Ukraine Family Scheme](#).

Please contact Ukraine.safeguarding@gov.wales if there are any other operational scenarios where further guidance would be helpful.

This document may not be fully accessible.

For more information refer to our [accessibility statement](#).

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Go to <https://www.gov.wales/homes-ukraine-eligible-minors-visa-schemes-html> for the latest version.

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