

# United Kingdom: Information for stateless people and those at risk of statelessness fleeing Ukraine

ENS Focal Point: [Jesuit Refugee Service UK](#)

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*This briefing provides country-specific information for stateless people and those at risk of statelessness fleeing Ukraine. It is intended as a source of information for refugee response actors and affected individuals. The focus is on stateless people and people at risk of statelessness, including those who are undocumented. Links to more general information for refugees from Ukraine are provided throughout. We will endeavour to keep this information updated. Please contact [Ukraine.crisis@statelessness.eu](mailto:Ukraine.crisis@statelessness.eu) if you have relevant updates. Unless otherwise shown, the source of information provided is the ENS Focal Point.*

## 1. ENTRY REQUIREMENTS & REGISTRATION

Although the UK authorities have expressed support for those arriving in the UK from Ukraine, the immigration rules are complex and restrictive. A visa is needed to enter the UK. There are three different Schemes in place to support those who wish to enter or remain in the UK. The UK has set up the Ukraine Family Scheme and the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, which allow people fleeing the war in Ukraine to join their family members in the UK (or their family members) or a person who has offered to sponsor them. However, the Ukraine Family Scheme is [closed to new applicants](#) as of 19 February 2024, so new applications to come to the UK under a Ukraine Scheme can only be made under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. The [Ukraine Extension Scheme](#) allows Ukrainian nationals and their immediate family members to apply for permission to stay in the UK if, broadly speaking, they held a permission to stay in the UK previously. A [Ukraine Permission Extension](#) (UPE) Scheme, announced in February 2024, will provide an additional 18 months of permission to remain in the UK to those who have come to the UK through a Ukraine Scheme. Some stateless people and people at risk of statelessness may be eligible if they meet the family member criteria for the Ukraine Family Scheme, or if they have evidence of a Ukrainian immediate family member for the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. However, people who lack documentation may face practical difficulties in accessing any of the Schemes.

As of 20 February 2024, it was [reported](#) that 107,800 visas had been issued under the Ukraine Family Scheme and 222,800 visas had been issued under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. In addition, it was [reported](#) that 8,100 applications to extend permission to stay in the UK had been successful under the Ukraine Family Scheme (in-country applications) and 23,400 visa applications had been successful under the Homes for Ukraine Extension Scheme. Since the war began, the UK Home Office has issued over 252,600 visas to people fleeing Ukraine.

The UK Visa Application Centre in Kyiv is open for biometric enrolments and document scanning for UK visa applications, but appointments are limited. If the visa application is successful, the applicant will need to travel to the Visa Application Centre in Warsaw with a valid international passport to collect the visa vignette.

An applicant should consider carefully which Ukraine Scheme they wish to apply under. Applicants should avoid applying under multiple Ukraine Schemes to avoid delays in processing the application.

Unless they are eligible to enter through another avenue (e.g. if they are family members of a Ukrainian national who may apply for a Scheme or visa), stateless people and people at risk of statelessness may only enter the UK by applying for asylum. [No data](#) has been published on entry and protection granted to stateless people fleeing Ukraine. Applications for asylum cannot be made from outside the UK, applicants should inform a Border Force Officer on arrival that they wish to claim asylum. A person entering the UK unlawfully may not be able to stay in the country under the [Illegal Migration Act 2023](#), which the Government has recently introduced.

For more information on entry and UK border control, see: [UK Government, Entering the UK: Overview; Illegal Migration Bill: overarching factsheet](#); [Safe and legal routes](#); [Ukraine Advice Project UK](#); [UK in a Changing Europe, The Illegal Migration Bill - UK in a changing Europe](#) and [Rwanda policy unlawful: unpacking the Court of Appeal's decision - UK in a changing Europe](#); Fragomen, [Worldwide/Ukraine: Temporary Protection Status – Country-Specific Updates – the UK](#); and the Asylum Information Database, [Country Report: United Kingdom](#).

<p><b>Documents required</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Stateless people</a>: no particular documentation required on arrival, but entry may be restricted; if available, documents that may evidence the need for international protection, identity and/or the person’s statelessness (see Sections 2 and 3)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Other adults and children</a>: passport, visa</li> </ul>
<p><b>Entry and registration</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals may be detained on arrival, although this is unlikely; pregnant women can only be detained for up to 72 hours, unless extended up to a week in total by ministerial approval</li> <li>• On arrival at the border, entry is only permitted to people who present a visa or claim asylum</li> <li>• No systematic pattern of registration at the border</li> <li>• <a href="#">Asylum seekers</a>: apply immediately at the border; screening interview at the UK border if asylum is claimed upon arrival, or later if an asylum seeker becomes eligible for asylum after arrival in the UK</li> <li>• <a href="#">Unaccompanied children</a>: biometric data collected; identification of welfare concerns and risk or indicators of trafficking; notification to local authorities and child protection services; placement depends on age of the child</li> <li>• <a href="#">Illegal Migration Act 2023</a>: new legislation has introduced significant changes to the immigration system, although the practical effects are yet to be seen. Under the Illegal Migration Act 2023:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ a person who has entered the UK irregularly will be detained and removed to either their home country or a safe third country that can consider their asylum claim. Once removed, the person will have no right to re-entry, settlement or citizenship in the UK;</li> <li>○ if a person challenges their removal, this will not prevent their removal to a designated safe third country. Only in some exceptional circumstances (when there is a real risk that a person would suffer serious and irreversible harm) will the person not be removed to a safe third country;</li> <li>○ the UK Home Office can detain asylum seekers for up to 28 days without giving them access to immigration bail or judicial review. All other legal remedies will be exhausted within weeks. There is no right of in-country appeal. <i>Habeas Corpus</i> will apply; and</li> <li>○ immigrants who entered irregularly are deemed ineligible for asylum altogether and will be removed from the UK within weeks.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <a href="#">Safe third countries under the Illegal Migration Act 2023</a>: the Act includes a list of 57 safe third countries to which an asylum seeker may be removed, including EEA countries, Albania, and Rwanda (Ukraine is not on the list). To date the UK has made arrangements regarding the transfers of asylum seekers only with Rwanda.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Documents issued</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Asylum seekers</a>: issued confirmation letter showing they are on immigration bail; an “<a href="#">ARC card</a>” after screening interview (often delayed by several months) (unless they have been detained)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Entry status</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asylum seeker, visa holder ('person subject to immigration control')</li> </ul>

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## 2. ROUTES TO INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

Stateless people and people at risk of statelessness fleeing the conflict in Ukraine may apply for refugee status or humanitarian protection, including people who entered the UK through the Ukraine Family Scheme, the Homes for Ukraine Scheme or the Ukraine Extension Scheme. If asylum is granted, the refugee is granted a biometric residence permit (“leave to remain”) and can obtain “indefinite leave to remain” after five years (but note the exception in respect of the Ukraine Extension Scheme route below). However, the Ukraine Family Scheme is [closed to new applicants](#) as of 19 February 2024, so new applications to come to the UK under a Ukraine Scheme can only be made under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. As of [new amendments](#) announced in February 2024, a number of grounds for refusal to the Ukraine Scheme which were [initially omitted](#) will now be applied. After one more year, they may apply for naturalisation. These routes to protection are summarised in the table below.

A [Ukraine Permission Extension](#) (UPE) Scheme, announced in February 2024, will provide an additional 18 months of permission to remain in the UK to eligible applicants, and provide the same entitlements as other Ukraine schemes to access work, benefits, healthcare and education. This Scheme will be available to those who have come to the UK through the Ukraine Family Scheme, the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, and the Ukraine Extension Scheme, or to those who previously had permission to remain under a Ukraine scheme and now hold a valid visa to remain in the UK.

	Refugee Status (asylum) or Humanitarian Protection	Ukraine Family Scheme Closed as of February 2024	Homes for Ukraine Scheme	Ukraine Extension Scheme
<b>What is it?</b>	<p><u>Refugee Status</u>: protection for people eligible under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees</p> <p><u>Humanitarian Protection</u>: protection for people who do not meet the conditions for Refugee Status but would face a real risk of suffering serious harm if returned</p> <p><u>Under the Illegal Migration Act 2023, a person who has entered the UK irregularly will be detained and removed to either their home country, or a safe third country that can consider</u></p>	Temporary visa concessions for family members of British citizens and residents in the UK who are fleeing Ukraine; non-British nationals could act as sponsors under this Scheme, subject to conditions on the sponsor’s own immigration status and provided that they have British or Irish citizenship, settled status, or permanent residence (‘indefinite leave to remain’) in the UK; allowed people fleeing Ukraine to join family members in the UK or to extend their stay in the UK.	Temporary visa concessions for Ukrainian nationals who have named people in the UK willing to sponsor them, and their family members	Temporary visa concessions for Ukrainian nationals and their close family members who had permission to be in the UK at any time or for any period on or between 18 March 2022 and 16 November 2023; or who previously had permission to be in the UK and that permission expired on or after 1 January 2022

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	<p><u>their asylum claim. Once removed, the person will have no right to UK re-entry, settlement, or citizenship. The Government encourages asylum seekers to follow lawful immigration routes instead.</u></p>	<p>This scheme closed to new applicants in February 2024.</p>		
<p><b>Can stateless and/or undocumented persons apply?</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The Ukraine Family Scheme is <a href="#">closed to new applicants</a> as of 19 February 2024, so new applications to come to the UK under a Ukraine Scheme can only be made under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.</p>	<p>Yes, if they meet the eligibility criteria; there is an extra step for applicants who do not hold a valid Ukrainian passport</p>	<p>Yes, but only if they can provide a valid passport or other travel document that shows their identity, together with evidence that they have/had permission to be in the UK, such as a biometric residence permit, a visa vignette in the passport or a Home Office document showing their permission to enter or remain in the UK</p>
<p><b>Where to apply?</b></p>	<p>Inform immigration officials at the border about wish to claim asylum or register with the asylum intake unit (<a href="#">details on making an appointment</a>)</p>	<p><a href="#">It is no longer possible to apply under this scheme (as of 19 February 2024)</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Apply online</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Apply online</a> until 16 May 2024. It will remain open after 16 May 2024 for children born in the UK; parents can apply on their children’s behalf if their children were in the UK after 18 March 2022 and if the parent has permission to be in the UK either (1) under one of the Ukraine Schemes, and/or (2) if they qualify under the Ukraine Extension Scheme.</p>
<p><b>Procedure &amp; rights</b></p>	<p>Registration of the application; screening interview with an immigration officer; applicants to provide any</p>	<p>It is no longer possible to apply under this scheme (as of 19 February 2024)</p>	<p>Free to apply; online application form and uploading of documents applicants must be outside the UK to apply; if an applicant does not hold a valid Ukrainian international</p>	<p>Free to apply; online application form and uploading of documents; applicants must apply from within the UK</p>

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	documents they have (e.g. identity documents, police registration certificates, birth and marriage certificates, school records); issuance of an <a href="#">“ARC card”</a> with information on (claimed) identity and asylum-seeker status; substantive interview (which can be delayed or dispensed); written decision; <a href="#">typically no right to work while claim is pending</a> (unless it has been pending for over 12 months through no fault of the applicant and permission is granted); right to accommodation and support to meet essential living needs		passport or an expired Ukrainian international passport with a formal extension stamp issued by the Ukrainian government, the applicant will need to book and attend an appointment at <a href="#">a visa application centre</a> (the same applies to child applicants)	
<b>Rights upon recognition</b>	Right to stay in the UK for five years; right to work; study (subject to approval); social security; family reunion; after initial five years, applicants may apply for renewal of protection and/or <a href="#">naturalisation</a>	Right to stay in the UK for up to three years; right to work; study (subject to approval); social security	Right to stay in the UK for up to three years; right to work; study (subject to approval); social security. As of 19 February 2024, new applicants will be granted 18 months leave to remain	Right to stay in the UK for up to three years; right to work; study (subject to approval); social security; time spent in the UK on this visa may not be counted in a future application for indefinite leave to remain in the UK

For more information, see:

- UK Government, [Claim Asylum](#), [Ukraine Family Scheme](#), [Homes for Ukraine scheme](#), [Ukraine Extension Scheme](#), [Illegal Migration Bill: overarching factsheet - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#); [Safe and legal routes - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- UK in a Changing Europe, [The Illegal Migration Bill - UK in a changing Europe \(ukandeu.ac.uk\)](#); [Rwanda policy unlawful: unpacking the Court of Appeal’s decision - UK in a changing Europe \(ukandeu.ac.uk\)](#)
- [UNHCR Regional Protection Analysis #2](#)

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- [UNHCR Regional Refugee Response Plan \(January-December 2023\)](#)
- Fragomen, [Worldwide/Ukraine: Temporary Protection Status – Country-Specific Updates – the UK](#) European Council of Refugees and Exiles, Asylum Information Database, [Country Report: United Kingdom](#)
- European Council of Refugees and Exiles, [Information Sheet – Measures in response to the arrival of displaced people fleeing the war in Ukraine](#) (March 2023)
- Right to Protection, [Who are stateless persons who fled Ukraine after the Russian invasion on 24 of February, 2022](#)
- KIND & Child Circle, [Note on unaccompanied children fleeing Ukraine](#)
- [KIND, Updates to the UK Ukraine Schemes from 19 February 2024](#)

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## 3. STATELESSNESS DETERMINATION AND PROTECTION STATUS

For stateless people, it is important to determine both a claim for international protection and their statelessness. Each application should be assessed and both types of status should be explicitly recognised so that even if refugee status, humanitarian protection, or another form of temporary protection ceases, the person remains entitled to protection as a stateless person. Statelessness determination should be conducted either in parallel with or following the refugee status determination, with due regard to the primacy of the asylum claim and the principle of confidentiality for refugees in statelessness determination procedures. For more information, see: [ENS briefing on statelessness determination & protection in Europe](#).

The UK has a dedicated Statelessness Determination Procedure leading to a right to reside in the UK. The procedure is summarised in the table below. The question of statelessness may also arise within or as part of a claim for refugee status or humanitarian protection. For more information, see: [ENS Statelessness Index United Kingdom](#).

Stateless people and people at risk of statelessness are strongly recommended to seek specialist legal advice (e.g. from [Jesuit Refugee Service UK](#), [Asylum Aid](#), or [Liverpool University Law Clinic](#)).

	Statelessness Status
<b>What is it?</b>	Protection under the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons (although the scope of protection is narrower than the 1954 Convention). A person who claims that they are stateless may apply for a right to reside ('leave to remain') under <a href="#">Appendix Statelessness of the UK Immigration Rules</a> subject to certain conditions and exclusion criteria (including not being recognised as a national of any country, and being unable to live permanently in any other country). Applicants will be required to show they have sought and failed to obtain or establish nationality in another country.
<b>Can stateless and/or undocumented persons apply?</b>	Yes
<b>Where to apply?</b>	Application is free and must be made using an <a href="#">online form</a> (only in English)
<b>Procedure &amp; rights</b>	Individuals must be in the UK to apply; submit documentation within 10 days of completing the online application (if available, e.g. identity, immigration and travel documents, birth and/or marriage certificates, documents that prove where the applicant lived before arriving in the UK); authorities may request further information and an interview (interpreter available); legal aid is not available for applications in England and Wales, unless Exceptional Case Funding is granted (people are advised to find free legal advice (see contacts below)); no time limit for the procedure set in law; applications can take <a href="#">up to 18-24 months to decide</a> ; no right to stay in the UK during the procedure; no guarantee against expulsion; no right to work pending application; administrative and judicial reviews possible but no automatic right to appeal
<b>Rights upon recognition</b>	Right to stay in the UK for five years (known as 'leave to remain', renewable); apply online for a Stateless Persons Travel Document; apply for work; right to access education; welfare benefits (e.g. public housing, subject to eligibility criteria); medical care; right to apply for naturalisation after five years' lawful residence and one additional year of permanent residence (subject to high fees)

## 4. REQUIREMENTS FOR ONWARD TRAVEL TO THIRD COUNTRIES

Beneficiaries of refugee status or humanitarian protection, and recognised stateless persons in the UK who are granted leave to remain on that basis, can apply for a [refugee travel document](#) or [stateless person's travel document](#), which allow travel to most countries. A refugee travel document will usually permit travel to all countries except the country of persecution. People should check that the destination country accepts such



travel documents before travelling. Travel documents are usually valid for up to 10 years if the person is settled in the UK, and cost £82 for most adults and £53 for children aged 15 or under.

## 5. OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

The UK Home Office has [confirmed](#) that Ukrainian surrogate mothers of British intended parents will be entitled to travel to the UK outside of the usual immigration rules, which may help prevent cases of statelessness among children born through surrogacy.

## 6. ORGANISATIONS ASSISTING STATELESS PEOPLE

<p><b>Asylum Aid</b>  <a href="https://www.asylumaid.org.uk">https://www.asylumaid.org.uk</a>                      +44 20 7 354 9631  <a href="mailto:advice@asylumaid.org.uk">advice@asylumaid.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Jesuit Refugee Service UK</b>  <a href="https://www.jrsuk.net/">https://www.jrsuk.net/</a>                      020 7488 7310  <a href="mailto:uk@jrs.net">uk@jrs.net</a></p>
<p><b>JustRight Scotland</b>  <a href="https://www.justrightscotland.org.uk">https://www.justrightscotland.org.uk</a>  <a href="#">Ukraine Advice Scotland</a>                      0800 995 6045                      Legal Helpline: Tuesday &amp; Thursday from 10am to 1pm (UK time)  <a href="mailto:ukraine@justrightscotland.org.uk">ukraine@justrightscotland.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Liverpool University Law Clinic</b>  <a href="https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/law/liverpool-law-clinic/">https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/law/liverpool-law-clinic/</a>                      +44 (0)151 794 5782  <a href="mailto:clinic@liverpool.ac.uk">clinic@liverpool.ac.uk</a></p>
<p><b>UK Government Immigration Helpline for Ukrainian nationals</b>                      +44 808 164 8810 or +44 175 390 7510                      Select Option 1                      9am – 5.30pm, Monday to Friday</p>	<p><b>UNHCR</b>  <a href="https://www.unrefugees.org.uk/">https://www.unrefugees.org.uk/</a>                      +44 20 3761 8094</p>
<p><b>Asylum Support Appeals Project</b>  <a href="https://www.asaproject.org/resources/organisations-who-can-help">https://www.asaproject.org/resources/organisations-who-can-help</a>                      List of UK helplines and networks, organisations that may help with asylum support enquiries, and links to lists of legal aid solicitors  <b>Advice Line:</b> 0203 716 0283 (2pm – 4pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays)</p>	<p><b>Refugee Council</b>  <a href="#">Support and information for people affected by the crisis in Ukraine</a>                      Freephone service to signpost support to refugees and people seeking asylum: 08081967272                      9.30-12.30 on Mondays, Tuesdays &amp; Thursdays.</p>
<p><b>British Red Cross</b>  <a href="https://www.redcross.org.uk/get-help/get-help-as-a-refugee/help-for-refugees-from-ukraine">https://www.redcross.org.uk/get-help/get-help-as-a-refugee/help-for-refugees-from-ukraine</a></p>	<p><b>Public Law Project</b>                      List of legal aid providers  <a href="https://publiclawproject.org.uk/content/uploads/2020/05/SIGNPOSTING-LIST-20.05.20.pdf">https://publiclawproject.org.uk/content/uploads/2020/05/SIGNPOSTING-LIST-20.05.20.pdf</a></p>
<p><b>Ukraine Advice Project UK</b>  <a href="https://advice-ukraine.co.uk/">https://advice-ukraine.co.uk/</a>  <a href="mailto:projectu@dlapiper.com">projectu@dlapiper.com</a> (English only)</p>	<p><b>Immigration Law Practitioners' Association (ILPA)</b>                      Directory of immigration advisors:  <a href="https://ilpa.org.uk/members-directory/">https://ilpa.org.uk/members-directory/</a></p>
<p><b>Migrant Help</b>  <a href="https://www.migranthelpuk.org/pages/category/asylum">https://www.migranthelpuk.org/pages/category/asylum</a>                      Free asylum helpline: 0808 8010 503                      Webchat:  <a href="https://ellis.custhelp.com/app/chat/chat_launch">https://ellis.custhelp.com/app/chat/chat_launch</a></p>	<p><b>Refugee Action</b>  <a href="https://www.refugee-action.org.uk/">https://www.refugee-action.org.uk/</a>  <a href="mailto:info@refugee-action.org.uk">info@refugee-action.org.uk</a>                      List of support services for people seeking asylum:  <a href="https://www.refugee-action.org.uk/help-support-advice-services/">https://www.refugee-action.org.uk/help-support-advice-services/</a></p>



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<p><b>Scottish Refugee Council</b> Ukraine Information and Advice <a href="https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/ukraine">https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/ukraine</a> Helpline: 08081967274 <a href="mailto:ukraine@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk">ukraine@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Refugee Council</b> <a href="https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/get-support/services/infoline/">https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/get-support/services/infoline/</a> Infoline, freephone England-wide signposting service: 0808 196 7272</p>
<p><b>The Law Society</b> Register of Asylum and Immigration Solicitors <a href="https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/">https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/</a></p>	<p><b>Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC)</b> Register of regulated immigration advisors <a href="http://home.oisc.gov.uk/adviser_finder/finder.aspx">http://home.oisc.gov.uk/adviser_finder/finder.aspx</a></p>