

Immediate benefit support for those fleeing the invasion in Ukraine

The Department for Work and Pensions is laying emergency regulations today (Monday 21 March 2022) so those arriving in the UK from Ukraine as a result of the Russian invasion can access Universal Credit and jobs support immediately.

Ukrainians will also be eligible for Housing Benefit, Pension Credit, Personal Independence Payment, Child Disability Living Allowance and Carers Allowance, and Attendance Allowance. Contributions-based Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), and Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) are also available for those Ukrainians who meet the criteria.

Translation services are available to help new arrivals with phone applications, with Work Coaches in DWP Jobcentres on hand to support people making claims online.

DWP staff are also delivering additional face-to-face assistance to those who need it – including tailored support to find work and advice on benefit eligibility – and will continue to do so.

Without the emergency legislation people arriving from Ukraine would be subject to the Habitual Residence Test, meaning they would have to wait up to three months before being able to receive income-related benefits, including Universal Credit.

Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Thérèse Coffey said:

My priority is that people fleeing the unimaginable horrors in Ukraine to seek safety here get the support and help they need from day one to move forward in their lives immediately.

Financial Secretary to the Treasury Lucy Frazer said:

It is vital that families coming from Ukraine can support their children from the moment they arrive, and by adjusting child benefit rules and ramping up our support, the tax system is pivoting to ensure this happens.

Salvation Army Refugee Response co-ordinator Major Nick Coke said:

We welcome the news that Ukrainians coming to the UK will be able to access benefits immediately and for those who are able, help to find suitable work.

With offices on the ground in Ukraine and the border countries providing emergency food and shelter, The Salvation Army sees first-hand the trauma those displaced by war have experienced. It is fitting that they receive targeted help when seeking refuge in the UK.

The regulations exempt those arriving from Ukraine, from the Habitual Residence Test and the Past Presence Test, meaning, if eligible, they can access Universal Credit, Housing Benefit, State Pension Credit and disability and carer benefits from day one.

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[PM call with President Zelenskyy of Ukraine: 20 March 2022](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy this afternoon.



The Prime Minister spoke to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy this afternoon.

He set out his intention to advance Ukraine's interests at this week's NATO and G7 meetings and in upcoming bilateral engagement with key allies, and he asked for the President's latest assessment of Ukraine's military requirements in the face of Russian aggression.

The Prime Minister outlined the UK's ongoing commitment to work alongside international partners to coordinate support to strengthen Ukraine's self defence. The leaders also discussed the ongoing negotiations and the Prime

Minister reaffirmed his staunch support for Ukraine's position.

Both leaders stressed the continued importance of sanctions in exerting pressure on Putin, and they condemned the abhorrent attacks on innocent civilians, following the appalling bombings in Mariupol.

The Prime Minister expressed his admiration for the bravery of Ukraine and was clear that the UK was committed to stepping up military, economic and diplomatic support in order to help bring an end to this terrible conflict.

The two leaders agreed to step up their direct communication even further in the days to come.

Published 20 March 2022

[£10 million for traveller sites across England will improve life chances and reduce unauthorised encampments](#)

- Funding will increase provision of traveller sites and improve existing ones
- £10 million for improvements will help travellers' social outcomes and give easier access to healthcare, education, employment
- New and better sites will reduce the likelihood of unauthorised encampments

New traveller sites will be created through a [£10 million fund](#) announced today (20 March 2022).

The funding, for 2022/23, will allow councils to provide improved transit sites and stopping places, so travellers have authorised places to stay, and access to facilities and services.

Councils can also bid for funding for new permanent sites to meet the needs of travellers in their local areas, as well as using it to refurbish existing sites.

As part of our ambitions to level up across the country, this fund will help improve travellers' life chances, by giving them easier access to local services including healthcare, education, and employment.

Providing more and better places to stay will also reduce tensions between travellers and the settled community, and the high costs of tackling unauthorised encampments.

Communities Minister, Kemi Badenoch, said:

It's vital that everyone has access to the kind of services that offer the best support. So, these new and improved sites will give travellers easier routes to healthcare, education, and employment.

This funding is just one of the ways the government is improving opportunities for communities across the country.

This funding can be used for new sites; improve existing sites through both refurbishment and rebuild; improve site infrastructure; or pay for public spaces on existing sites, such as community centres, play areas for children and stabling for horses.

By building more sites and temporary stopping places, it also aims to reduce the number of unauthorised encampments in England; reduce enforcement costs for councils; assist councils and local police in redirecting travellers from unauthorised encampments, and therefore enhance community cohesion between the settled community and travellers.

In addition to this fund, councils can already apply for a share of the £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Fund 2021-2026 for permanent and transit sites, and bricks and mortar accommodation for travellers.

[UK donates two million medical items to Ukraine](#)

- Latest shipment left in flight on Friday morning with thousands of doses of medicines, including pain relief
- Secretary of State for Health and Social Care affirms UK's commitment to stand shoulder to shoulder with Ukraine

More than two million items of medical supplies have been given to Ukraine by the UK to help the country cope with the medical emergency caused by the Russian invasion.

Items including vital medicines, wound packs, and intensive care equipment donated by NHS England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland have been flown to the region on ten flights over the past three weeks, leaving from Stanstead and Heathrow Airports and RAF Brize Norton.

The latest flight left from London Heathrow yesterday morning (Friday 18th March) carrying thousands of doses of medicine, including painkillers, with another flight – the 11th so far – expected next week.

Following an urgent request from Ukraine a refrigerated truck left for the region on Friday night carrying insulin injections and drugs critical for surgery which will save tens of thousands of Ukrainian lives. This is expected to arrive in the region in the coming days.

The UK government has been working closely with Ukrainian officials to deliver targeted support to ensure medical items are reaching the people who need them most.

Some of the significant items sent to the Ukraine so far includes:

- Nearly 3,000 adult resuscitators
- Around 160,000 wound care packs
- Over 300,000 sterile needles
- Over 32,000 packs of bandages
- 1,600 pieces of equipment for ventilators
- Over 54,000 cannulas
- 100,000 packs of medicines – around 800,000 doses – including antibiotics and painkillers
- 72,000 packs of gloves
- 28,000 FFP3 masks

Health and Social Care Secretary, Sajid Javid, said:

We're leading the humanitarian effort to support Ukraine by providing targeted medical support to those in need. In less than three weeks the UK has donated more than two million medical items.

Tens of thousands of sick or injured Ukrainians have now received treatment thanks to the donations made by NHS England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The UK will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of Ukraine in the face of Russia's appalling invasion.

Today's milestone of two million medical items donated to Ukraine forms part of the government's wider humanitarian response to this emergency. Earlier this week the UK government flew 21 children with cancer to the UK, who are now receiving lifesaving treatment from the NHS.

Foreign Secretary, Liz Truss, said:

The UK is providing £220 million in life saving humanitarian aid to Ukraine. In addition to medical supplies we are providing shelter and hygiene kits. The UK is also donating over 500 mobile generators to provide vital energy to Ukrainian hospitals and shelters.

Our humanitarian advisors have been deployed to neighbouring countries to assess needs on the ground and we are supporting those

affected by the deteriorating situation in Ukraine.

On Thursday 17 March the government announced that Ukrainians fleeing their home country will be guaranteed free access to NHS healthcare, including hospital services, GP and nurse consultations, urgent care centres and injury units.

More than 6,100 visas have been granted through the Ukraine Family Scheme and, for those with valid Ukrainian passports, the government has removed the need to attend an in-person appointment to conduct biometric checks before travelling to the UK.

Since Monday 14 March, people in the UK have been able to register their interest to sponsor a named Ukrainian under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, with more than 150,000 people registering.

The government has provided £400 million in humanitarian and economic aid to Ukraine and neighbouring countries since the Russian invasion started, along with defensive anti-tank and anti-aircraft weaponry.

[UK City of Culture 2025 shortlist revealed](#)

- Bradford, County Durham, Southampton and Wrexham County Borough selected
- Winner will be announced by the Culture Secretary in May

Bradford, County Durham, Southampton and Wrexham County Borough are today unveiled as the four areas shortlisted to be UK City of Culture 2025.

The four locations were approved by Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries based on independent advice made to the government by a panel of experts led by Sir Phil Redmond.

The finalists were whittled down from a record twenty initial bids to eight outstanding longlist applications which also included Cornwall, Derby, Stirling and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon.

All bids were asked to explain how they would use culture to grow and strengthen their local area, as well as how they would use culture to recover from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The vast benefits of winning the prestigious title include attracting millions of pounds in additional investment to help boost regeneration, a year in the cultural spotlight with hundreds of events encouraging long-lasting participation in the arts, and growth for local tourism.

Arts Minister Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay said:

The UK City of Culture competition shows the important role that culture can play in levelling up our towns, cities and rural communities – bringing investment, great events, thousands of tourists, and opportunity for people of all ages and backgrounds.

We have seen a huge positive impact in this year's host city, Coventry, with millions of pounds in investment and thousands of visitors.

This has been a record year for bids, which is great to see. Congratulations to the four shortlisted places – I wish them all the best of luck.

Coventry UK City of Culture 2021 has seen more than £172 million invested in funding music concerts, public art displays, the UK's first permanent immersive digital art gallery, a new children's play area in the centre of the city, the new Telegraph Hotel and improvements to public transport.

More than a third of event tickets (43 per cent) issued to Coventry residents as part of the City of Culture went to financially stretched people or those facing adversity and a third of the cultural programme was co-created with local communities. A further £500 million has been ploughed into the city's regeneration since it was confirmed as the UK City of Culture.

More than £150 million of public and private sector investment was invested into 2013 winner Derry-Londonderry while the 2017 winner Hull saw a 10 percent increase in visitor numbers during its tenure.

Sir Phil Redmond, Chair of the City of Culture Expert Advisory Panel, said:

Culture can act as a catalyst for community engagement, civic cohesion and a driver for economic and social change as previously seen not just in Derry-Londonderry (2013), Hull (2017) and Coventry (2021), but all those other places who went on a journey to develop their own cultural strategy. Simply taking part has proved a catalyst in itself. We have had a great longlist to select from, which made the shortlisting difficult, but I am now looking forward to visiting each of the shortlisted places with the panel to witness culture's catalytic effect in action.

Martin Sutherland, Chief Executive, Coventry City of Culture Trust, said:

This is such an exciting moment for the shortlisted cities and we

wish them all the best for the next stage. Holding the title in Coventry has been a privilege and has made a considerable impact already on the City and its citizens. We can't wait to see what comes next for those who've used the bidding process to truly consider the value of culture – all will have inspired the next generation of artists, organisations, funders and supporters. The expert advisory panel, chaired by Sir Phil Redmond, will now visit the four shortlisted places before making their final recommendation in May. The winner will be announced this year in Coventry.

The competition, delivered by DCMS in collaboration with the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, brings culture into the heart of communities and gives people an opportunity to get involved in everything the arts have to offer.

The eight longlisted bidders received, for the first time, a £40,000 grant to strengthen their applications which were scrutinised by the expert advisory panel against [published criteria](#).

The unsuccessful areas will each receive detailed feedback on their bids. Ministers and officials will also engage with them on how best they can maintain momentum and realise their ambitions in the future.

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Notes to Editors:

- The [expert advisory panel](#) includes representatives from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and brings together a wide range of experience.
- To learn more about each shortlisted bid visit the cities' websites: [Bradford](#), [County Durham](#), [Southampton](#), [Wrexham](#).
- Read more information on [Coventry UK City of Culture 2021](#).
- For the first time this year groups of towns were able to join together and apply for the title to be awarded to their local area – widening the scope of which areas of the country could benefit.

Full list of bids:

- Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon
- The City of Bangor and Northwest Wales
- The Borderlands region, comprising Dumfries and Galloway, Scottish Borders, Northumberland, Cumbria and Carlisle City
- Bradford
- Conwy County
- Cornwall
- Derby
- County Durham
- Lancashire
- Medway

- City of Newport
- Powys
- Southampton
- Stirling
- The Tay Cities region
- Torbay and Exeter
- Wakefield District
- City of Wolverhampton
- Wrexham County Borough
- Great Yarmouth & East Suffolk