

Home Secretary announces visa concessions for Ukrainians

Building on immediate support provided in recent weeks to assist British Nationals to leave Ukraine, the Home Secretary has today confirmed that Ukrainians who are on work, study or visit visas in the UK will have their visas temporarily extended or be able to switch onto different visa routes.

Changes announced for Ukrainian nationals in the UK include:

- Ukrainian nationals on an existing points-based system route can extend their leave in the UK
- Ukrainian nationals on an existing visitor visa can exceptionally switch into a points-based system immigration route without having to leave the UK
- Ukrainian nationals on an existing visitor visa can apply under the family route for further leave without meeting the immigration status requirement, provided they meet the requirements for leave based on exceptional circumstances
- Ukrainian nationals on an existing seasonal worker visa will have their leave in the UK extended to 31 December 2022
- Ukrainian nationals in temporary HGV/pork butcher jobs will have their leave in the UK extended to 31 December 2022 and will also be allowed to apply to the skilled worker route

These concessions are available for people with valid visas in the UK.

All visa routes remain under constant review and any changes to the visa policy will not compromise border security.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

We stand shoulder to shoulder with Ukraine amid this unprovoked and antidemocratic act of Russian aggression.

I have immediately ordered changes to our visa policy to provide certainty to our Ukrainian friends and colleagues living, working and studying in the UK.

Two weeks ago, the Home Secretary ordered a package of measures to support British Nationals and their families in Ukraine. This included temporarily waiving application fees for those eligible under the Family Migration route, allowing entry for 12 months for others who did not meet the requirements and fast-tracking visas through a 24/7 helpline.

The Home Office priority remains supporting British Nationals and their families who want to leave Ukraine and UKVI are working around the clock to process visa applications.

We have surged staff to visa application centres. Dependants of British Nationals resident in Ukraine who need a UK visa can apply through the new, temporary location in Lviv or through a Visa Application Centre in nearby countries, including Poland, Moldova, Romania and Hungary.

However, all other visa services in Ukraine have been suspended.

The UK's flexible and agile visa system allows these proportional changes to be implemented quickly while ensuring appropriate security checks remain in place.

Her Majesty's Passport Service is prioritising British Nationals in Ukraine who need a passport and working with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office to ensure those who need emergency travel documents receive them quickly.

Last week, the Home Secretary ordered the closure of the Tier 1 Investor Visa amid security concerns that it was being used by people acquiring their wealth illegitimately and being associated with wider corruption.

[The Government has published guidance with the latest advice for family members of British nationals in Ukraine, and Ukrainian nationals in Ukraine and the UK](#)

[PM statement to the House of Commons on Ukraine: 24 February 2022](#)

[PM statement to the House of Commons on Ukraine](#)

Mr Speaker, I have just come from a meeting of G7 leaders, joined by Secretary General Stoltenberg of NATO,

and with permission I will update the House on our response to President Putin's onslaught against a free and sovereign European nation.

Shortly after 4am this morning, I spoke to President Zelenskyy of Ukraine as the first missiles struck his beautiful and innocent country and its brave

people,

and I assured him of the unwavering support of the United Kingdom.

And I can tell the House that at this stage, Ukrainians are offering a fierce defence of their families and their country

and I know that every Hon Member will share my admiration for their resolve.

Earlier today, Putin delivered another televised address and offered the absurd pretext that he sought the “demilitarisation and denazification of Ukraine”.

In fact he is hurling the might of his military machine against a free and peaceful neighbour, in breach of his own explicit pledge and every principle of civilised behaviour between states,

spurning the best efforts of this country and our allies to avoid bloodshed.

For this, Putin will stand condemned in the eyes of the world and of history:

he will never be able to cleanse the blood of Ukraine from his hands.

And though the UK and our allies tried every avenue for diplomacy until the final hour,

I am driven to conclude that Putin was always determined to attack his neighbour, no matter what we did.

Now we see him for what he is: a bloodstained aggressor who believes in imperial conquest.

I am proud that Britain did everything within our power to help Ukraine prepare for this onslaught,

and we will do our utmost to offer more help as our brave friends defend their homeland.

Our Embassy took the precaution on 18 February of relocating from Kyiv to the city of Lviv in western Ukraine,

where our Ambassador, Melinda Simmons, continues to work with the Ukrainian authorities and to support British nationals.

Now we have a clear mission:

diplomatically, politically, economically – and eventually, militarily – this hideous and barbaric venture of Vladimir Putin must end in failure.

At the G7 meeting this afternoon, we agreed to work in unity to maximise the economic price that Putin will pay for his aggression.

And this must include ending Europe’s collective dependence on Russian oil and gas

that has served to empower Putin for too long.

So I welcome again Chancellor Scholz's excellent decision to halt the certification of Nord Stream 2.

Mr Speaker, countries that together comprise about half of the world economy are now engaged in maximising the pressure, economic pressure, on one which makes up a mere 2 per cent.

For our part, today the UK is announcing the largest and most severe package of economic sanctions that Russia has ever seen.

With new financial measures we are taking new powers to target Russian finance. In addition to the banks we have already sanctioned this week,

today – in concert with the United States – we are imposing a full asset freeze on VTB.

More broadly, these powers will enable us to totally exclude Russian banks from the UK financial system, which is of course by far the largest in Europe,

stopping them from accessing Sterling and clearing payments through the UK.

And with around half of Russia's trade currently in US dollars and sterling, I am pleased to tell the House the United States is taking a similar measures.

These powers will also enable us to ban Russian state and private companies from raising funds in the UK, banning dealing with their securities and making loans to them.

We will limit the amount of money that Russian nationals will be able to deposit in their UK bank accounts.

And sanctions will also be applied to Belarus for its role in the assault on Ukraine.

Overall we will be imposing asset freezes on over more 100 new entities and individuals

on top of the hundreds we've already announced.

This includes all the major manufacturers that support Putin's war machine.

Furthermore, we will also ban Aeroflot from the UK.

Next – on top of these financial measures and in full concert with the United States and the EU –

we will introduce new trade restrictions and stringent export controls, similar to those they, in the US are implementing.

We will bring forward new legislation to ban the export of all dual-use items

to Russia,

including a range of high-end and critical technological equipment and components in sectors including electronics, telecommunications, and aerospace.

Legislation to implement this will be laid early next week.

These trade sanctions will constrain Russia's military-industrial and technological capabilities for years to come.

We are bringing forward measures on unexplained wealth orders from the Economic Crime Bill to be introduced before the House rises for Easter.

And we will set out further detail before Easter on the range of policies to be included in the full Bill in the next session – including on reforms to Companies House and a register of overseas property ownership.

We will set up a new dedicated 'Kleptocracy Cell' in the National Crime Agency to target sanctions evasion and corrupt Russian assets hidden in the UK

and that means oligarchs in London who have nowhere to hide.

And Mr Speaker, I know this House will have great interest in the potential of cutting out Russia from SWIFT,

And I can confirm – as I have always said – that nothing is off the table

But for all of these measures to be successful it is vital we have the unity of our partners, the unity we in the G7 and other fora.

And Mr Speaker Russian investors are already delivering their verdict on the wisdom of Putin's actions

and so far today,

Russian stocks are down by as much as 45 percent, wiping \$250 billion from their value, in the biggest one day decline on record.

Sberbank – Russia's biggest lender – is down by as much as 45 percent,

and Gazprom down by as much as 39 percent,

while the rouble has plummeted to record lows against dollar.

We will continue on a remorseless mission to squeeze Russia from the global economy piece by piece, day by day and week by week.

And we will of course use Britain's position in every international forum to condemn the onslaught against Ukraine,

and we will counter the Kremlin's blizzard of lies and disinformation

by telling the truth about Putin's war of choice and war of aggression.

And we will work with our allies on the urgent need to protect other European countries that are not members of NATO and could become targets of Putin's Playbook of subversion and aggression.

And we will resist any creeping temptation to accept what Putin is doing today as a fait accompli.

There can be no creeping normalisation, not now, not in months to come, not in years.

We must strengthen NATO's defences still further,

so today I called for a meeting of NATO leaders which will take place tomorrow.

And I will be convening the countries that contribute to the Joint Expeditionary Force, which is led by the United Kingdom and comprises both NATO and non-NATO members.

Last Saturday, I warned that this invasion would have global economic consequences and this morning the oil price has risen strongly.

The Government will do everything possible to safeguard our own people from the repercussions for the cost of living,

and we of course stand ready to protect our country from any threats, including in cyberspace.

Above all, the House will realise the hard and heavy truth that we now live in a continent where an expansionist power,

deploying one of the world's most formidable military machines,

is trying to redraw the map of Europe in blood,

and conquer an independent state by force of arms,

and it is vital for the safety of every nation that Putin's squalid venture should ultimately fail and be seen to fail.

However long it takes, that will be the steadfast and unflinching goal of the United Kingdom,

I hope of every Hon Member of this House,

and of every one of our great allies,

certain that together we have the power and the will to defend the cause of peace and justice, as we have always done.

And I say to the people of Russia, whose President has just authorised an onslaught against a fellow Slavic people,

I cannot believe that this horror is being done in your name or that you really want the pariah status that these actions will bring to the Putin regime.

And to our Ukrainian friends in this moment of agony, I say we are with you, and we are on your side.

Your right to choose your own destiny is a right that the United Kingdom and our allies will always defend.

And in that spirit I join you in saying slava Ukraini.

And I commend this statement to the House.

G7 Leaders' Statement on the invasion of Ukraine by armed forces of the Russian Federation: 24 February 2022

We the Leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) are appalled by and condemn the large-scale military aggression by the Russian Federation against the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine, directed partly from Belarusian soil. This unprovoked and completely unjustified attack on the democratic state of Ukraine was preceded by fabricated claims and unfounded allegations. It constitutes a serious violation of international law and a grave breach of the United Nations Charter and all commitments Russia entered in the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris and its commitments in the Budapest Memorandum. We as the G7 are bringing forward severe and coordinated economic and financial sanctions. We call on all partners and members of the international community to condemn this attack in the strongest possible terms, to stand shoulder to shoulder with Ukraine, and raise their voice against this blatant violation of the fundamental principles of international peace and security.

This crisis is a serious threat to the rules-based international order, with ramifications well beyond Europe. There is no justification for changing internationally recognised borders by force. This has fundamentally changed the Euro-Atlantic security situation. President Putin has re-introduced war to the European continent. He has put himself on the wrong side of history.

We are committed to uphold peace, stability and international law. We are united in our support for the people of Ukraine and its democratically elected government. In this dark hour our thoughts are with the people of Ukraine. We stand ready to support with humanitarian assistance in order to mitigate the suffering, including for refugees and displaced persons from the Russian aggression.

We call on the Russian Federation to stop the bloodshed, to immediately de-escalate and to withdraw its forces from Ukraine. We also call on Russia to ensure the safety of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission. We also condemn the involvement of Belarus in this aggression against Ukraine and call on Belarus to abide by its international obligations.

We condemn in the strongest possible terms Russian President Putin's decision on February 21 to recognise the Donetsk and Luhansk self-declared entities in eastern Ukraine as "independent" states as well as his decision to send Russian military forces into these regions. We call on other states not to follow Russia's illegal decision to recognise the proclaimed independence of these entities. The decision by President Putin is a grave violation of the basic principles enshrined in the UN Charter, in particular the respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of states and also a blatant breach of UN Security Council resolution 2202 – supported by the Russian Federation as a permanent member of the Security Council – as well as of the Minsk agreements, which stipulate the return of the areas concerned to the control of the Ukrainian Government.

We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders and territorial waters as well as the right of any sovereign state to determine its own future and security arrangements. We reaffirm that illegally occupied Crimea and the self-declared "people's republics" are an integral part of Ukraine.

We condemn President Putin for his consistent refusal to engage in a diplomatic process to address questions pertaining to European security, despite our repeated offers.

We stand united with partners, including NATO, the EU and their member states as well as Ukraine and remain determined to do what is necessary to preserve the integrity of the international-rules base order. In this regard, we are also closely monitoring global oil and gas market conditions, including in the context of Russia's further military aggression against Ukraine. We support consistent and constructive engagement and coordination among major energy producers and consumers toward our collective interest in the stability of global energy supplies, and stand ready to act as needed to address potential disruptions.

[PM virtual meeting with G7 leaders: 24 February 2022](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson attended a virtual meeting of G7 leaders on the response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.



The Prime Minister attended a virtual meeting of G7 leaders this afternoon on the response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Following an update from the NATO Secretary General, the Prime Minister stressed the gravity of the situation we are currently facing in Ukraine.

He said that it was clear that President Putin was trying to subjugate the people of Ukraine using extreme violence. He reiterated that Putin must fail in his ambitions.

The Prime Minister outlined the economic steps the UK will take to punish President Putin and his regime for their actions. He told G7 partners that this is an historic turning point for the world, and the international community will be judged on our response. He urged fellow leaders to work together as one to do everything in their power to isolate Putin politically, economically and militarily.

The Prime Minister also underscored the need to support the Ukrainian people and updated leaders on the steps the UK has taken to bolster the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

He thanked the German Chancellor for convening G7 leaders and looked forward to discussions with all NATO leaders tomorrow.

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[New divorce laws will come into force from 6 April 2022](#)

On 6 April this year changes to the legislation on divorce will come into force. We will be launching a new online service to accommodate this change.

The old service will be unavailable from 31 March 2022 while we prepare for these changes.

Changes to divorce law

The Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Act 2020 reforms the legal requirements and process for divorce. The act aims to reduce the potential for conflict amongst divorcing couples by:

- removing the ability to make allegations about the conduct of a spouse
- allowing couples to end their marriage jointly

The act also introduces a minimum period of 20 weeks between the start of proceedings and application for conditional order. This provides couples with a meaningful period of reflection and the chance to reconsider. Where divorce is inevitable, it enables couples to cooperate and plan for the future.

It will no longer be possible to contest a divorce, except on limited grounds including jurisdiction.

If you're getting divorced and have started your application

If you have an application saved on the current digital service and still want proceed, you'll need to access your account and submit your application by 4pm on 31 March 2022.

Alternatively, you can wait until the new digital service is launched. If you still want to apply for a divorce, you can start your application again from 6 April 2022.

If you've started filling out a paper application form, you'll need to make sure it's received by the court by 4pm 31 March 2022. If you're sending it in the post, you'll need to make sure it reaches the court by that date.

If you haven't started your application

It can take time to get the right documents together for your application. So, if you haven't started an application yet, you may want to wait until the new services are available from 6 April 2022.

Important dates

Whether you're a solicitor or applying for a divorce yourself, remember:

- from 31 March 2022 you can no longer apply on the current paper or digital systems or access a saved digital application which is yet to be issued by the court
- from 31 March to 5 April 2022 the digital service will not accept new applications
- from 6 April 2022 the new paper and digital services will be available

Urgent applications

Urgent applications can only be used when the issue of the divorce petition is time critical. This includes when time is critical for jurisdiction or when a freezing injunction is needed. You'll likely need legal advice to make an application.

We'll continue to accept urgent applications that need to be considered after the deadlines set out above and before the 6th April. We'll issue where possible, if received by post or email, before 4pm on the 5th April.

If you're submitting your urgent application by email, use this address: onlineDFRjurisdiction@justice.gov.uk (this inbox will not be monitored after 4pm on 5 April 2022).

Additional information

Decree Nisi and Decree Absolute applications that have been issued will be saved and remain available on the service.

More information on [getting a divorce](#) is available on GOV.UK.