**Housing Options for people with a Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme visa (Homes for Ukraine)**

6th October 2022

**What are the housing options for Ukrainian guests who are living with hosts in East Sussex?**

We are working in partnership with hosts as we support them in their generous commitment to accommodate Ukrainian guests in East Sussex. We are also committed to welcoming Ukrainian guests to the UK and ensuring that their housing options are made clear.

This guidance explains what options and support are available to hosts and guests.

We strongly encourage hosts and guests to discuss expectations as early as you can, and within the first 4 months of guests’ arrival. This should include talking about what hosts can offer and for how long, what guests’ future intentions are, and how you will plan next steps.

Hosts have committed to provide accommodation to their guests for a minimum of 6 months, but many will be able to continue to accommodate their guests for longer. Whatever you decide to do at the 6-month point, please inform us at least 2 months before you think your situation may change. You can do that by contacting us at [ukraine@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:ukraine@eastsussex.gov.uk).

The options for hosts and guests after six months are:

* Continuing sponsorship
* Finding a new host
* Finding privately rented accommodation

**Continuing sponsorship**

Many hosts may be able to continue their sponsorship arrangement beyond six months. We are asking hosts to continue hosting their guests for as long as they can, as many Ukrainians will not be ready to move on after 6 months and the severe housing shortage in East Sussex and across the UK means that moving on is not easy.

Monthly ‘thank you’ payments to hosts are available for 12 months and these will continue automatically if you continue to host, for up to 12 months.

We understand that not everyone can continue to host after 6 months. Where that is the case, we encourage you to work with your guests to develop a plan for how they will move on and a realistic timescale for this wherever possible. If you need help, we may be able to signpost or refer you to services who can advise you, please contact us on [ukraine@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:ukraine@eastsussex.gov.uk)

**Finding a new host**

If hosts can no longer accommodate their guests, it may be possible to find a new host.

It may be possible to find a new host through someone that you already know, or through local groups within the community. Some local organisations may be able to help find a new host. If you are not sure who can help, you can contact us on [ukraine@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:ukraine@eastsussex.gov.uk).

If guests do find a new host it is important to let us know as soon as possible and before any move takes place, so we can arrange the necessary host checks and monthly thank you payments. We can only fully support new arrangements once these checks are completed.

**Finding privately rented accommodation**

If it is not an option to find a new host, guests can look for privately rented accommodation.

This helpful guide will help you understand [how to rent in England](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-rent). This will help guests when they are ready and able to move out of sponsorship into independent accommodation. This guide is available in [Ukrainian](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1093993/How_to_rent__easy_read_Ukrainian_translation.pdf) and [Russian](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1093994/How_to_rent__easy_read_Russian_Translation.pdf).

Rents in East Sussex are high, compared to average incomes, which means many people find it difficult to find accommodation in this area that they can afford. It may be worth considering other areas of the UK which may have more affordable options.

You can [research the average costs of renting in the UK](file:///C:\Users\gforshaw\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\XILAXSI4\Private%20rental%20market%20summary%20statistics%20in%20England%20-%20Office%20for%20National%20Statistics%20(ons.gov.uk)), to help understand what is available and affordable in your situation. There is also information available about [rights and responsibilities as a tenant](https://www.gov.uk/private-renting) and welfare benefit entitlements: [Entitled To](https://www.entitledto.co.uk/benefits-calculator/Intro/Home?cid=f98965a9-0b3c-4883-bfd1-4da816eb657b).

The [Local Housing Allowance](https://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/) (LHA) is the maximum level of benefit that guests may receive in Universal Credit if they require welfare benefits to help with rent. Guests can check the LHA for the area they are looking to move to. LHA rates are generally a lot lower than market rents, which means guests are likely to have a shortfall and will need to make up the difference themselves between LHA and the rent being charged, so they will need to be certain they can afford to move into independent accommodation.

Information on renting in [Scotland](https://www.mygov.scot/browse/housing-local-services/renting-property), [Wales](https://gov.wales/renting-property) and [Northern Ireland](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/buying-selling-and-renting-home/private-renting) is also available.

Financial help with a deposit and rent in advance to access privately rented accommodation, is available through your [local housing office](https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/community/housing/local-housing-office), when guests have found a property and are ready to secure the tenancy. Access to help with rent deposits is dependent on the Council being certain that the guest can afford the property.

**Contacting your local council for housing advice**

Your district or borough council provides housing advice, and assistance to households at risk of homelessness. To contact your local housing authority for housing advice or homelessness support please follow the below link:

[Your local housing office | East Sussex County Council](https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/community/housing/local-housing-office)

It is important to remember that both privately rented accommodation and social housing is in short supply in East Sussex. Local households can wait for many years for social housing in East Sussex. Households approaching councils as homeless, can live in emergency accommodation (usually B&B) for a long time, often outside of East Sussex, before a settled housing solution is found. These households will often only be made one offer of privately rented housing.