**Housing Options for guests (Homes for Ukraine)**

**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.

The options for hosts and guests after six months are:

1. Continuing sponsorship
2. Finding a new host
3. Finding privately rented accommodation
4. **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 of £350 (increased to £500 between October 2022 and March 2023) are available with an additional one-off payment of £1,000 to hosts who are able to continue hosting for at least 12 months.

We understand that not everyone can continue to host. 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.

Depending on the type of accommodation your host is providing, it may be possible for your host to offer you a tenancy instead. See ‘Finding Privately rented accommodation’.

1. **Finding a new host**

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

This could be 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.

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.

1. **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).

You can research the average costs of renting in the 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).

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. Many guests may find that accommodation is more affordable and available in other areas of the UK. Guests may need to look for accommodation outside of the South East to find a home they can afford.

Some guests would like to rent a home with another Ukrainian family to share the costs. This can present a good option for small families. However, larger homes are particularly expensive in East Sussex so it may be necessary to look further afield or to consider what can realistically be afforded in the area. Rooms within a shared house are the most viable option for single people.

There are many property apps available that guests can use to find a place to rent in a specific town or city of their choice. These include:

[Socciio](https://socciio.co.uk/) – homes to rent within LHA rates in the UK

[Zoopla Property](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDMsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMjA3MTUuNjA4MTQ1MjEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy56b29wbGEuY28udWsvIn0.xx44v2a3pk3IlWVn1OdrPzi9gGSApemts4b8To9zpsA/s/2245210312/br/141086177553-l)
[Rightmove UK](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDQsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMjA3MTUuNjA4MTQ1MjEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5yaWdodG1vdmUuY28udWsvIn0.nsXpvkPyivehF7NFa1HuJOCXeS5rFdVtTcwa49tBhQ0/s/2245210312/br/141086177553-l)
[OnTheMarket](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDUsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMjA3MTUuNjA4MTQ1MjEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5vbnRoZW1hcmtldC5jb20vIn0.XY84mJPjLd8Iiiwi8O9jQL2kqypbwDTsTrhoMtI_bGc/s/2245210312/br/141086177553-l)

[SpareRoom](https://www.spareroom.co.uk/)

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 support to help with renting**

When guests have found a property to rent and approached the landlord or letting agent, financial help is available from [Sussex Community Development Association](https://sussexcommunity.org.uk/our-services/) (SCDA). SCDA will provide the deposit and rent in advance and where required, a rent guarantor for landlords. To apply for this financial help, go to [SCDA](https://sussexcommunity.org.uk/our-services/) and complete and return the application form to moveonhomesforukraine@sussexcommunity.org.uk

Enquiries and a copy of the application form can also be requested by contacting moveonhomesforukraine@sussexcommunity.org.uk

This support is dependent on whether the guest can afford the property. An affordability check will be carried out. If the accommodation is not affordable for you, you will need to remain with your host or find a new host for the duration of your stay in the UK.

The property does not have to be in East Sussex to qualify, it can be located anywhere in the UK.

To help with the monthly rent, 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](https://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/).

LHA rates (the maximum welfare benefit paid) 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 live in independent accommodation.

Some guests may be affected by the [benefit cap](https://www.gov.uk/benefit-cap). The benefit cap is the maximum amount of benefits that working-age claimants and their household can receive. A claimant's housing benefit or universal credit is reduced to ensure that the total amount of benefits received is not more than the benefit cap level. Benefit cap usually affects families with children, who have rent liability and are unemployed.

Guests can check their welfare benefit entitlements including how much help they may receive towards their monthly rent, at [Entitled To](https://www.entitledto.co.uk/benefits-calculator/Intro/Home?cid=f98965a9-0b3c-4883-bfd1-4da816eb657b).

If you are claiming Universal Credit and you now have a tenancy agreement, you will need to log on to your Universal Credit account to report the change and complete the section “where you live and what it costs”.

[Housing costs and Universal Credit: Renting from a private landlord - GOV.UK (](https://www.gov.uk/housing-and-universal-credit/renting-from-private-landlord)[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)[)](https://www.gov.uk/housing-and-universal-credit/renting-from-private-landlord)

**Contacting your local council for housing advice**

Your district or borough council provides housing advice, and assistance to households at risk of homelessness.

Housing is in short supply in East Sussex. If guests become homeless, they will be offered emergency accommodation, often outside of East Sussex. They could stay in this accommodation for a long time before one offer of settled housing is found. This would usually be privately rented accommodation and could be outside of the area.

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)