

Information for Sponsors Based In Woking Area

£200 Pre-Pay Card & £350 Sponsor Payment

When you know the date of your guest's arrival, you should contact the team at Woking Council (if this is your local council) for an appointment to collect pre-payment cards. You need to provide the following information:

- Date of arrival
- Names of all guests
- Your address

There will be a card provided for each family member. Guests will need to take their Ukrainian passports or ID together with their official visa letter as proof of their eligibility.

The cards take 24-48 hours to activate once issued.

Email: Refugee.support@woking.gov.uk

Phone: 01483 743646

Address: Gloucester Square, Woking, GU21 6YL

You should also request a Homes for Ukraine Sponsor payment form at the same time. This can be completed and emailed back to the team. This enables the council to pay you the £350 "thank you" payment. The payment is usually made a month in arrears from your guest arriving.

Mobile Phone & Sim Card Services:

The most important thing to help your guest integrate into the UK system is to get a UK phone number as this is essential for the many forms they are required to complete.

A few Vodafone 6 month Sim cards remain available at the Ukrainian Hub at the Lighthouse. Once these run out, Three currently offer a 30 day Pay As You Go Sim, with unlimited data and local calls in the UK. Free calls to the Ukraine are also available with this card.

Guests are required to show their Ukrainian passport and Visa letter to receive a Sim Card.

[Three has rolled out a support package for Ukrainian refugees \(3g.co.uk\)](#)

Address: Unit 2 Bandstand Mall, The Peacocks Shopping Centre, Woking, Surrey, GU21 6GH

Opening times below:

[Three \(3\) Store Locator - Find your nearest store \(3g.co.uk\)](#)

If they cannot obtain one of these free cards, there are many Sim cards available offering Pay as You Go packages within the UK for approximately £10 a month. A quick internet search will pull up the current "best buys".

Bank Accounts

We have found the following banks the easiest for opening accounts:

Barclays – If your guest has a valid Ukrainian international passport, they can download the app to their phone. They will need to have changed the "region" on their phone to the UK.

They can then apply for an account via the app. Make sure they have their passport and visa letter to hand when completing the application.

To prove their address, they will be sent a code via the post to the host's address. Once they have received the code, they input this into the app and an account is automatically created.

Monzo – There has also been positive feedback in respect of Monzo for ease of opening an account.

Natwest Woking – If your guest wants to open an account in person, the Natwest branch on the High Street has a lot of experience in assisting new arrivals as it is very close to the Lighthouse.

Address: 1 High Street, Woking, GU21 6BG

[natwest near Woking High Street - Opening times natwest](#)

Biometric Residence Pass (BRP) Application

Your guests will receive a stamp in their passport on arrival enabling them to stay for 6 months.

If they did not attend a VAC centre as part of their visa application, they will need to convert this into a 3 year visa by applying for a BRP card. This involves filling in an online form and attending an interview in Croydon or Central London.

The link to apply for a Ukrainian BRP is here – do not use the main Gov.UK website as this takes you to the general application form that covers all nationalities. This link gives a specific Ukrainian application.

[Ukraine Scheme BRP \(visas-immigration.service.gov.uk\)](#)

VAC Centre Attendees: Guests who attended a VAC centre as part of their visa application should have details on their acceptance letter of where they should pick up their BRP card (rather than making an appointment). Despite sponsors specifying a local post office for collection, we are aware of cards being sent to a central post office address in London.

Other Essential Paperwork

Government Forms & Benefits:

In order to access support from the Job Centre and to be able to work in the UK, your guest should apply for a National Insurance Number and Universal Credit.

National Insurance Number:

This is a fairly straight forward process online. It can only be done once the guest has arrived. The response email suggests it will take 8 weeks for the National Insurance number to arrive, but our experience is that the numbers are generally being issued within 2 weeks.

[Apply for a National Insurance number - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Application is free - do not use any other sites on google as these will charge your guest!

Universal Credit Application:

This can be done online but requires a UK bank account. Some guests have used their host's bank account to start the process and then switched once they have received their own account. Please make sure that you have agreed this with your guest if you take this route.

[Universal Credit: How to claim - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

This application once submitted will generate an appointment at the Job Centre at the Woking Civic Offices in Woking town centre to provide their documents for review and certification.

Appointments have usually been booked within 5 working days.

Alternatively, it is possible to book an appointment to attend the Job Centre at the Civic Offices to go through the application with an advisor.

Child Benefit:

If your guest has children they are eligible to receive Child Benefit, which normally would require that they post actual passports or birth certificates to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).

However, once the guests have made their online Universal Credit application and have been invited to an appointment at the Job Centre, they can take their children's documents (passport, birth certificate etc) to the appointment and the officer will take a copy and stamp the photocopy as verified.

Children are not required to attend this appointment. (DO NOT FORGET TO COMPLETE THE CHILD BENEFIT FORM – THE DWP TEAM ONLY STAMP THE FORM AND ID DOCUMENTS FOR THE GUESTS)

Job Centre Help:

Once your guests have registered for Universal Credit the job centre will assist in their work search. They regularly run sessions on how to create a CV, job search and interview techniques for which we have a group of volunteer translators. These are held at the Job Centre at Church Street West – there are 2 offices in Woking.

The Job Centre also try to join us at the Ukrainian Hub at the Lighthouse each week to assist with any ad hoc queries.

Clothes Banks:

If your guest needs clothes and other practical items for items there are several sources available locally.

Rodica Geangos Singharay has a large supply of clothes and kids equipment that has been donated for Ukrainian refugees locally. Contact her on 07786536160 to visit her in Knaphill. She can also be contacted via the Woking Ukraine Hosts Whatsapp group.

Soles 4 Good based at Fairoaks Airport in Chobham have also collected a large amount of clothes for Ukrainian arrivals. Contact Tamarka Egan on 07766911901 for an appointment.

The Lighthouse community hub in Woking, where the Ukrainian Hub is held has kids clothes and a "Style Studio" for women and men who need additional clothes on arrival.

Orthodox Church Services:

The closest Orthodox church to Woking is at the St Edward Brotherhood in Brookwood Cemetery.

This is a Greek Orthodox monastic community, but welcomes local Orthodox families of all nationalities to their daily and weekend services

Address: Saint Cyprian's Avenue, Off Cemetery Pales, Brookwood, Surrey, GU24 0BL.

Details of services via the link below:

[Saint Edward Brotherhood](#)

Ukrainian Hub – Tuesdays between 10.30am and 2.30pm

The hub is a chance for Ukrainian guests to get together and also for hosts to meet up. This provides valuable community and an opportunity to access a pool of knowledge and share local information. We also host local community organisations to support both guests and hosts.

Amongst other things you will find:

- Citizens Advice Bureau presentations
- Job Centre advisors
- Foodbank
- Clothes bank & Style Studio
- Jigsaw play scheme for kids under the age of 11
- Ukrainian Choir
- English lessons
- Wellness support
- Haircuts
- Chance to swap Ukrainian and Russian language books
- Community lunch

Address: The Lighthouse, 8-10 High Street, GU21 6BG

[THE LIGHTHOUSE - Lighthouse Woking](#)