



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Young Ukrainians in the UK Two Years On: Lives in Limbo

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THE REPORT AT A GLANCE

<h2>Key challenges</h2>	<h2>What can be done?</h2> <p>(see the full list of the recommendations at the end of the report)</p>
<p>Most young Ukrainians are willing to stay in the UK and contribute to their local economies and communities. Returning to Ukraine is not an option for many men and people from occupied territories.</p>	<p>Following the Citizens UK Manifesto 2024, create pathways to citizenship for Ukrainians that will enable them to stay after their visa has expired.</p>
<p>There is a lack of affordable housing while fewer hosts are available.</p>	<p>Launch an awareness campaign to attract more hosts for displaced Ukrainians.</p> <p>Ensure hosts have necessary checks to host vulnerable women and children.</p>
<p>Schooling is available but lacks cultural sensitivity.</p>	<p>Raise awareness among teachers (in particular, in history, geography and art) about sensitivities around some topics related to Ukraine-Russia relations, and necessity to address them.</p>
<p>Young Ukrainians face underemployment, while solo parents with younger children are more vulnerable in the job market.</p>	<p>Create a campaign to raise awareness and promote gender- and displacement-sensitivity among employers regarding youth (including those from Ukraine) seeking jobs and resources.</p>
<p>Young Ukrainians struggle to receive culturally sensitive free support in mental health.</p>	<p>Create an awareness-raising campaign about trauma-sensitive approaches for working with patients from Ukraine and other war-torn countries.</p>
<p>Some young Ukrainians experience othering and hostilities from other migrants and host communities.</p>	<p>Raise awareness about the war on Ukraine that causes ongoing civilian death and mass population displacement. Prevent hate speech.</p>

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INTRODUCTION

The project's rationale

The project is underpinned by the need to evaluate the measures supporting young, displaced Ukrainian people. While young people constitute a large number of arrivals to the UK from Ukraine (see Figure 1), there is little data about their experiences including education, employment, housing and social relations in general. Still, most of the young refugees would like to stay in the UK even when it would feel safe to return to Ukraine, as both our study, and the recent data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) demonstrate.¹ Since 2022, many of the young Ukrainians have graduated from school, started higher education (HE) degrees or begun working, and are trying to build their lives in the UK. However, they face challenges from forced displacement, war trauma, and adapting to a new country. Despite their efforts, there is little indication that their social and intellectual contributions are adequately valued. Ukrainians have no certainty of their future life in the UK as neither the Ukrainian Family Scheme nor the Ukrainian Sponsorship Scheme ("Homes for Ukraine") provide pathways for citizenship.

To address these challenges, this report aims:

1. To analyse the accessibility of educational, employment, welfare, housing and migration policies and how young people respond to them;
2. To reveal their daily experiences in education, employment, housing and social relations;
3. To explore mobility aspirations (to stay in the UK, move to another country or return to Ukraine);
4. To co-produce recommendations, together with young Ukrainians and stakeholders, for the government, local authorities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international organisations on how to improve conditions for young refugees in the UK and provide pathways for citizenship.

Within the project, we produced separate reports for Poland and Germany, where the same methodology was implemented. Additionally, we prepared a briefing paper on how Ukrainian youth envision the future of their country and their role in it.

How many displaced Ukrainians are in the UK?

After the beginning of Russian full-scale aggression against Ukraine, the UK created a special safe route for those Ukrainians fleeing the war named the Ukrainian Scheme. It comprises three schemes – the Ukrainian Family Scheme, the Ukrainian Sponsorship Scheme and the Extension Scheme. As of 8 July 2024 a total of 209,900 Ukrainians have arrived in the UK since Russia's invasion, including 58,100 people through the Ukraine Family Scheme, and 151,800

1 Office for National Statistics. (2024) [Visa holders living in the UK under the Ukraine Humanitarian Schemes: UPE analysis](#).

through the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme (Homes for Ukraine).²

Young people comprise a large share of the arrivals, with 28% of displaced Ukrainians in the UK being under 18 according to UK-wide statistics (Figure 1). While there is no information available for age breakdown between the 18–64-years-old category, we would expect this to include a significant number of people under 30 years of age, as different studies on displacement demonstrate that this group is more mobile. Worldwide, people under 30 comprise 31% of migrants.³ Also, since men between 18 and 60 years old are not allowed to leave Ukraine and potentially can be drafted, many teenagers left the country before their 18th birthday.

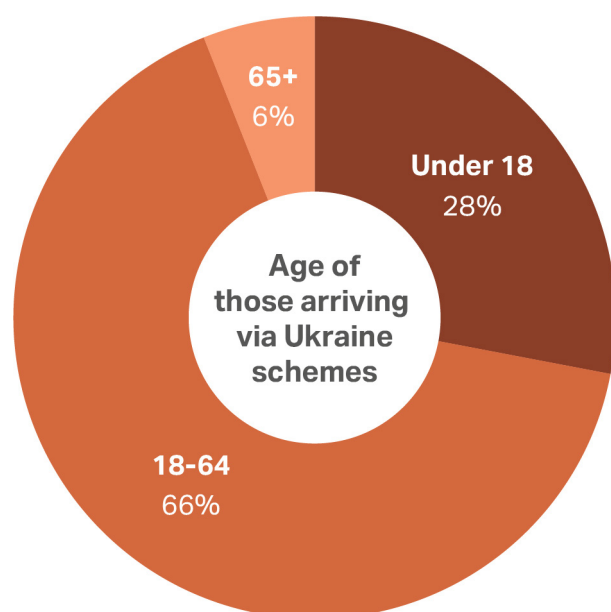


Figure 1. Age breakdown of those arriving via Ukraine Schemes as of 31 March 2024 (gov.uk)⁴

Methodology

The study focused on the West Midlands, allowing us to engage with local communities, NGOs and authorities. Also, this is a good case study area in terms of its ethnically diverse population and young demographics with Birmingham being the youngest major city in Europe, with nearly 40% of its population being under the age of 25. Birmingham is also the most populated local government district in England, serving over 1.1 million people and hosting 8,068 people under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.⁵ The UK research was part of a larger project that included Germany and Poland.

The project employed a participatory research methodology. Five community researchers were recruited, including four young Ukrainian displaced people in the UK and one young person of Ukrainian origin who moved to the UK before the war started. The project academic staff together with the Community Practitioner Research Programme (CPRP) of the University of Birmingham provided three phases of research training on research ethics and research methodology. Four community researchers have been awarded a Certificate of 9 credits at Level Three. The questions for the interview guide were co-designed by academics with community researchers. The sample consisted of 30 semi-structured interviews in the West Midlands and included people between 16 and 29 years old who had moved to the UK from Ukraine via Homes for Ukraine and Family Schemes (see Table 1).

In addition, six interviews with stakeholders were conducted by Dr Natalia Kogut, including representatives of NGOs and Birmingham City Council. Together with Citizens UK, a house

2 UK Government. (2024) [Ukraine Family Scheme, Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme \(Homes for Ukraine\) and Ukraine Extension Scheme visa data](#).

3 IOM (2024) [IOM Youth Changemakers Initiative: Supporting Youth Action on Migration Worldwide](#).

4 UK Government. (2024) [Ukraine Family Scheme, Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme \(Homes for Ukraine\) and Ukraine Extension Scheme visa data](#).

5 UK Government. (2024) [Regional and local authority data on immigration groups, year ending March 2024](#).

listening event was organised in March 2024 that included 20 displaced Ukrainians.

The study received approval from the University of Birmingham ethical committee. The participants provided informed consent before the start of the interview and were able to withdraw from the study if they so wished. The research undertaken with displaced Ukrainians was anonymous. Mixed sampling procedures have been employed including social media, snowball, and purposive sampling.

Gender

Female 18	Male 12
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Type of visa

Homes for Ukraine 27	FS* 3
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*Family Scheme

Origin in Ukraine

Occupied territories 15	Not-occupied territories 15
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Chronic illness or disability

Without 28	With 2
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Age

16-17 6	18-21 9	22-25 6	26-29 9
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Table 1. Displaced participants sample summary

Research limitations

As in all studies, this research had some limitations. First, since we interviewed people who are currently in the UK, we missed those who had to return to Ukraine as they did not want to stay in the UK, or due to the pitfalls of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. Secondly, since the study has been conducted in the West Midlands, some of its conclusions might vary slightly if it had been undertaken across all the UK. Nonetheless, our triangulation of the

available data and reports from the UK make us sure that the experiences of young people shared in this study are quite similar across all of the country. Thirdly, many participants were hesitant to talk about their hosts. The participants were assured of the anonymity of the study, but dependency and fears of losing accommodation could prevent them from being more open. Finally, the percentages of different opinions we present are for illustrative purposes. The sample of 30 people may not be generalisable to the full cohort and may not be representative in a quantitative sense.

FINDINGS

Housing

Hosts are compensating for gaps in social welfare for Ukrainian refugees

Almost everyone interviewed had experience of living with hosts as the majority used the Homes for Ukraine Scheme to enter the UK,⁶ though at the time of the research, some participants already lived in alternative accommodation.

Many participants shared how much support they received from their hosts and formed friendly family-like bonds, such as in the following example:



'We arrived and he received us very warmly. He considers me to be his granddaughter. He said that we are his children and he loves us very much and we are his Ukrainian family. At first he helped us with groceries, when we arrived and we had not yet been paid money, he said that he would pay for everything and help us ...' (female, 16 years old).

However, the research revealed that hosts often had to compensate for gaps in social and welfare support including help in enrolling children in school, looking for jobs, accessing healthcare, and even providing some

financial support. Since sponsors varied in terms of their time and financial capacities, knowledge, and readiness to help overall, Ukrainians' experiences, especially during the first few months after arrival, were very mixed. The 2022 ONS survey showed that about half of surveyed Homes for Ukraine sponsors (45%) had not discussed with their guests the pathways for looking for accommodation after the current hosting arrangement ends; these findings echo with our study.⁷ This can be partly explained by the fact that hosts were not provided with sufficient information about possible pathways in relation to the housing, nor to ensuring the welfare of their guests.⁸ Those whose hosts did not provide any support often found themselves in a kind of an informational vacuum.

Abusive behaviour and gender-based violence

Of the 27 participants interviewed who used the Home for Ukraine Scheme, three reported some serious issues with their hosts related to abuse and gender-based violence, and several shared similar stories from their Ukrainian acquaintances. One of the participants noted that the son of their host was alcohol-addicted which made them feel unsafe, and one of the Birmingham

6 Homes for Ukraine offer accommodation with hosts for at least 6 months, with an opportunity to extend the living arrangements for a year, and later for 2 years. As at July 2024, the monthly payment for hosting between £350 to £500 per month.

7 The Rights Lab. University of Nottingham. (2024) [Homes for Ukraine: learnings to inform and shape future hosting schemes](#).

8 The Rights Lab. University of Nottingham. (2024) [Homes for Ukraine: learnings to inform and shape future hosting schemes](#).

organisations working with refugees helped them to be reallocated to another host.

Gender-based violence, unfortunately, was quite common in host–guest relationships because of the lack of proper vetting of sponsors, the power relations, and the lack of a support network.⁹ It is an underreported phenomenon as people feel anxiety and shame together with dependency due to the precarity of their status. The following testimony from one of the participant’s friends shows just the tip of the iceberg:



'She moved away from the host because he was unpredictable enough ... he tried to somehow flirt with her, with my friend... then he generally started telling her that you should move... and he told her a lot of things and she just at a certain point, well, she left and found this social housing' (female, 23 years old).

Negative relations with hosts and temporality of housing

There are no special protection measures for guests from ill-treatment by their hosts. Sponsors can evict guests without giving a period of notice to find other accommodation. As a father of a small child shared:



'We had one main problem – when in the second month of living with the sponsors, relations developed in such a way that they asked us to leave. And we had nowhere to go. We were offered housing in another town...

but when we saw this housing, it was the house of a former drug dealer there, there was no door, there were terrible conditions... We asked our sponsors to stay at theirs literally for a week or two so that we can find housing, they gave us hope that yes [we could], but the next day we were told that no... - you have to leave' (male, 29 years old).

Following this, the family had to register as homeless with the local council (while one kind person from a community hosted them informally without getting any payments) and received social housing after two months.

Often the hosts find that they are unprepared to share a house with people from another culture. Our study mainly confirmed findings research on Eastern Europeanism in relation to Ukrainian refugees, where hosts often treated their guests through the lens of an assumed hierarchy, sometimes perceiving Ukrainians as low-skilled, deprived, and uneducated.¹⁰ In turn, confusion about 'social customs and etiquette'¹¹ and language became barriers preventing the guests from feeling more comfortable.

Unhealthy housing

Almost 4 million homes in England endanger the health of the people who live in them.¹² Some research participants faced massive issues related to mould, drafts, hazards, and overcrowding in rented accommodation. As one of the participants shared:



'The windows did not close, that is, we went in [the house], there was a very strong smell

9 Pertek, S., Kuznetsova, I. and Kot, M. (2022) "Not a single safe place": The Ukrainian refugees at risk of violence, trafficking and exploitation. Findings from Poland and Ukraine. Research report, University of Birmingham.

10 Galpin, C. et al. (2023) Support for Displaced Ukrainians in the UK. Centrala with Jones, S. and Kogut, N. (2024) Effectiveness of Support for Displaced Ukrainians. In: Centrala (2024), The Homes for Ukraine Scheme. A Report on Collaboration, Challenges, and Change, 9-19.

11 See also Hong, S. (2024) Homes for Ukraine' Scheme: Looking at the Experience of Hosts and Guests. A Research Project Report by the Brushstrokes Community Project.

12 The Healthier Housing Partnership (2023) Better Housing for Better Health. Available at: https://www.healthierhousing.co.uk/_files/ugd/3ce280_07728a447480465d8af40afc3653455a.pdf

of mould and we saw this mould. It attacked from below, that is, near the fireplace. But the agent who showed us this house said that it was all normal' (female, 17 years old).



Difficulties in finding accommodation

The most common barriers preventing Ukrainians from renting accommodation are the following:

- Difficulty in providing guarantors or paying upfront rent payment for usually six months;
- Difficulty in providing references from previous landlords as often there is no previous landlord;
- The need to provide payslips with sufficient income as landlords do not wish to accept welfare benefits recipients.

Many people started looking for jobs and independent accommodation soon after arriving in the UK, but the documents required to secure a rental contract often exceed their available resources:



'I was faced with the problem that all landlords needed a work contract, but I work as self-employed. I needed documents, a credit score, a credit history and bank statements. And we also needed guarantors for rent. And it was very difficult because I

had just arrived and literally seven months later I started looking for housing' (female, 27 years old).

Furthermore, the local housing allowance is oftentimes much lower than the private rent charges, and so the likelihood of a successful tenancy is diminished. Also, those who have been living in the UK for over a year could not receive support from the Refugee and Migrant centre.

People who lived with hosts in some areas with expensive rental market conditions faced difficulties in finding independent accommodation as they could not afford to pay a high rent. Some participants had to move to Birmingham as rented accommodation is more affordable there. However, it affected children's education as they had to change schools due to relocation.

The most vulnerable category of tenants is young people and single mothers, as well as all tenants that have impermanent immigration status, because landlords do not want to choose them, and they cannot even get to the stage of paperwork with estate agencies. Landlords are not willing to choose tenants with children due to child protection regulations that complicate the procedure for eviction in cases of non-payment or other reasons, so the norms that are aimed at children's protection often work against the Ukrainian refugees. As one of the research participants shared:



'It was difficult to rent an apartment, because you have to either have a guarantor or pay for six months in one payment and it was difficult, and I don't know anymore, that was the main problem... I don't know how single mothers who... no... rent an apartment there, are not able to work, and there, the sponsors are not, they are not ready to keep you' (male, 19 years old).

Social housing is in short supply, people wait years to receive it, and some are forced to live in homeless shelters. Social housing can be provided both for rent and for rent with the right to buy, but in any case, it will be kept by Ukrainians only until their visa expires as has been noted by one of our participants:



'From the moment we received this contract for this social housing, and we lived the first year, which I understand according to the contract, it was a trial one, and after that it was somehow automatically renewed when it is already interest-free, well, plus until the visa expires' (male, 29 years old).

Still, despite the various difficulties with renting housing, 17 out of 30 interviewees are already renting housing independently, and one more family received social housing. Some hosts, after six months or a year, entered into an agreement with their guests on the rental of a room or apartment, which gave them the opportunity to receive payment for the accommodation of guests in the form of housing benefit.

None of the participants of this study were able to afford home ownership. It is challenging for those Ukrainians who came to the UK under the Ukrainian Scheme to get any mortgage as they do not have pre-settled or settled status. The lack of a UK credit history and difficulties meeting income and deposit requirements are other barriers.

Overall, both our research and evidence from other studies¹³ suggest that there is not enough information available about procedures for renting, social housing or homeownership.

While no participants faced homelessness at the time of the research, Ukrainians displaced in the UK, including young dependent children, face significant risks of homelessness. It is known that 10,660 Ukrainian households were homeless or at least in danger of becoming homeless in 2024, and 66% of them have dependent children.¹⁴ Most of the cases occurred within the cohort that arrived via the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.



13 See, for example: Office for National Statistics. (2023) [Experiences of Homes for Ukraine scheme sponsors, UK: 10 to 21 August 2023](#). It was found that 77% of hosts surveyed by ONS mentioned that the general information about how to rent accommodation in the UK would be beneficial for Ukrainians.

14 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. (2024) [Homelessness management information - Ukrainian nationals: England](#); see also British Red Cross. (2023) [Homelessness among displaced Ukrainians in the UK: Summary of research findings](#).

Education

School education

The most common problems mentioned were:

- long wait to enroll in schools;
- the long commute to schools;
- the lack of sensitivity at schools in relation to war experiences;
- Moscow-centric approach in teaching Russia's history at some of the schools, and the lack of a GCSE in Ukrainian.

Some participants reported that they or their children were on waiting lists for many months. Living within a catchment area is not a guarantee children will get admission into a nearby school. Some parents with more than one child were forced to walk children to different schools located far from each other. As a mother of a primary age child noted:



"So, we applied for schools as soon as we arrived, and on ..., we received a message that the application was being processed. There was no answer at all for a month, and now we have received a letter saying that there is no place in any of the schools we have chosen. And we chose eight schools (female, 29 years old).

War is traumatic topic, but unfortunately it has not been addressed with sensitivity in some schools, as conversations and disputes with other children could be quite aggressive. As a 17-year-old girl shares:



'This happened, especially at school, because everyone has their own views on who attacked Ukraine and how, so sometimes I felt aggression, that not everything was so clear, but it did not lead to any physical conflicts, we only talked on negative notes.'

This is echoed by another participant, who mentioned that **'some pupils at school could say something good about Russia and bad about Ukraine'** (female, 17 years old). One even received a comment from another pupil who said he wants Ukraine to lose and Russia to win (male, 16 years old). None of those cases were discussed further with teachers.

The re-traumatisation of children happens daily, both via news and via communication with relatives who stayed in Ukraine. Some experience the bereavement of their loved ones without being able to see them for the last time. The awareness of the implications of war and displacement on the well-being of children needs to be taken into greater consideration. Participants of the workshop with stakeholders mentioned a case when a Ukrainian pupil was offered the opportunity to do an art piece using one of the techniques used by traditional Russian artists. Such a lack of both cultural sensitivity and understanding of the implications of war and displacement on children negatively affects children's well-being and attitudes towards school in general.

The content of the history curriculum with regard to Russia is often mono-ethnic and Moscow-centric. There are missed opportunities to engage with Ukraine from a decolonial perspective. Some bilingual or Russian-speaking Ukrainian children take the Russian language GCSE exam to improve their opportunities for further education. However, some of the topics for reading or talking could be reconsidered in the curriculum. There is no option to take a GCSE or A-level exam in Ukrainian. The St. Mary Ukrainian school submitted documentation to set it up (pending). While a Level 3 Extended Project Qualification in Ukrainian has been introduced in November 2023, most Ukrainian pupils are not aware of such an opportunity.

Access to Higher Education

Since the start of the full invasion, many universities in the UK have created support-pages with information about entry requirements and specific support for Ukrainian applicants. Ukrainians who stay under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, Ukraine Family Scheme, or the Ukraine Extension Scheme are eligible for student support and will be charged 'home status' tuition fees for new and continuing HE courses.¹⁵ Still, several issues persist according to our research:

- The lack of opportunities to receive an undergraduate degree in the UK for graduates of Ukrainian HE;
- Lack of information about different educational and professional training pathways in the UK.

Given that HE is a great opportunity to build skills which are often context related and gain social capital, there are limited opportunities for many Ukrainians, who feel that their Ukrainian education is not recognised in the UK. As some of our participants stated:

“My university degree is there [in Ukraine]... no one is interested in it [here], so it can be assumed that it is absent” (female, 26 years old).

“Ukrainians would be very happy if they created some more understandable ways of access to higher education, because many have a higher education, but it is not relevant; many people want to retrain in some other direction, if they have [qualifications] there, for example, I don't understand why not to do this, for example, it will help people adapt a lot” (female, 18 years old).

Students of Ukrainian HE institutions often have to make a difficult choice – to return to Ukraine

to complete their education on campus as some of the universities there have started to provide limited online provision, or to temporarily suspend or stop their study. For them, the opportunity to receive a higher education in the UK would make a massive difference. However, it is rare that students were able to transfer from Ukrainian to British HE, even to year 1. More work is needed among the admissions teams of universities to create clear pathways not only for an entry but for a transfer.

Regarding funding, it is not entirely clear how the student loan will work for Ukrainians after the visa expires and whether they will have to pay these funds before graduation. These questions often worry Ukrainian youth in Britain and become an obstacle to placement in British educational institutions. As one of our participants mentioned:

“...the fact is that now Ukrainians have access to the [student] loan, but when the visa expires, access to this loan should not, in theory, because the status changes, and they think that it is just a foreigner who just arrived and has to pay, and to pay not just nine thousand, but to pay twenty-seven a year, and it is clear that there are very few Ukrainians who can afford this, and they are unlikely to be on a sponsorship program in England” (female, 25 years old).

The research revealed that many young Ukrainian people lack information about HE and professional qualifications in the UK. While those who study at schools or colleges in the UK have an opportunity to receive careers guidance, young people who are not in this system rely mostly on 'word of mouth' as they do not know how to navigate information regarding education in the UK.

¹⁵ UK Government (2023) [Education for people from 16 years old to adults: Homes for Ukraine](#).

Employment

Most of the young people interviewed are either in education or work: out of the 30 young people, 13 are employed, four are studying in British higher education institutions and six are of school age. Unemployment together with the cost-of-living crisis affect young people across the UK. The West Midlands Combined Authority has an overall rate of 8.5% youth (18–24 years) unemployment, versus the UK average of 4.9%.¹⁶ However, displaced people face even greater challenges in finding jobs due to additional barriers such as language differences, lack of local work experience, and limited access to job networks. Also, as our study revealed, many Ukrainians are not able to find jobs or to access pre-invasion employment categories. The research demonstrates different factors contributing to unemployment or underemployment, specifically:

- The lack of English language proficiency;
- Caring responsibilities of those with young children;
- The lack of recognition of qualifications and experience received in Ukraine;
- Insufficient level of individual support from Job Centres;
- Rejections of apprenticeship proposals and some job contracts because of the visa limitations.

From one side, the choice to arrive in the UK rather than a different European country was dictated for many by some level of **language proficiency**, and most of the study participants had some command of English, though for some it is still not enough to be able to work or receive a professional qualification. As one of the participants shared:



'It's difficult because I have a low level of knowledge of the language. I, aah, well, until I raise my language level, it will be very difficult for me to find [work]. That's why I signed up for language courses from the beginning, when I pass the courses, then maybe doors will open for me' (female, 29 years old).

Ukrainians who moved to the UK at the start or middle of secondary school have a better command of English, feeling overall more integrated. Our study shows that some young people even help their parents to communicate in English if necessary.

Mothers with small children in most cases came without partners as men are not permitted to leave Ukraine with a few exceptions such as a disability or if they have three or more minor children. Caring responsibilities and the lack of a supporting family and friends network means that women with children cannot attend regular language classes or/and have a full-time job. Free childcare is normally limited to only 15 hours a week, and women whom we interviewed could not afford to pay for extra hours:



'...we don't pay, we only took 15 free hours, we go three times a week and that's all, because we don't have the financial means to take extra days, for example, to go for a full week' (female, 29 years old).

Ukrainian higher education degree qualifications, especially in the field of medicine and education, are not recognised in the UK. Some are recognised formally, but participants reported some bias from employers. Such a point of view is quite common:

¹⁶ See Asokan, S. and Brissett, Y. (2024) [Mayor launches plan to tackle youth unemployment](#). BBC News, 10 July 2024.



'I think Ukrainian education is very strong and very complex, and when they say that no, we won't do anything about it, well, you can't work in your specialty, it's frustrating to some extent, because you spent five years of your life for this to tell you that you cannot work in your specialty' (female, 25 years old).

Also, it is very difficult to get a first job without work experience in the UK. Sometimes people are forced to volunteer for many months for free to get a reference from an organisation for employment or carry out volunteer work in the hope of getting a job in the same organisation without any guarantees of getting it.

Bias against immigrants. While statistically, white non-British people¹⁷ do not face pay gaps in the UK, multiple studies demonstrate 'not colour-coded' racialisation or 'Eastern Europeanism' towards migrants from Poland, Romania and other Eastern and Central European countries in the UK.¹⁸ Some Ukrainians feel caught between Eastern and Western Europe, facing bias and discrimination. This affects their employment opportunities, leading to lower job prospects and negative work experiences.

As one of the participants noted:



'There may be some moments when you ask for a job and there is a choice between you and a Briton, there were situations when, unfortunately, a Briton was hired, and again, it works not only in Britain, but it also makes it so difficult for you to find a job because you are an immigrant' (male, 22 years old).

'Othering' also happens during work, from employers or clients, as another participant shared:



'It [the negative treatment because of the country of origin] was connected with the fact that we are from Ukraine, more with the fact that we are from Eastern Europe. Ah, this is again about hope and some kind of disappointment in England, this is when in the first period we were surrounded by people who took care of us as much as possible, they [hosts] helped us from every side and so on, and already when I started working more with clients there with such objections, they do not always have respect for people there, for immigrants, for representatives of Eastern Europe, when it is Poland, Romania, Ukraine, the Czech Republic, and so on' (male, 29 years old).

Inability to access pre-invasion employment categories. Many Ukrainians are forced to switch from high-skilled jobs to low-skilled jobs to somehow feed themselves and their families.¹⁹ The language barriers, lack of social capital, lack of recognition of Ukrainian qualifications are among the main factors contributing to this issue. For example, a ballet dancer who was full-time employed in one of the theatres in Ukraine, now works for minimum wage. An expert in informational security with HE qualifications in that sphere and professional experience works as a self-employed 'handy-man'. He asked a Job Centre to help him to find a job in this sphere, but they did not offer any vacancies, and neither did they advise if he needs to have additional professional training in the UK.

17 Office for National Statistics. (2022) [Ethnicity pay gaps, UK: 2012 to 2022](#). (Accessed 10 June 2024)

18 Lewicki, A. (2023) East-west inequalities and the ambiguous racialisation of 'Eastern Europeans'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 49(6), 1481-1499.

19 This issue has also been noted in the large-scale survey in 6 European countries among Ukrainian. See: ReliefWeb. (2023) [Monitoring the experiences of people displaced from Ukraine: Europe | From March 2022 to March 2023](#).

This affects the financial situation of people. As one of the young professionals said in response to the question 'How can you compare your financial situation and social status here and in Ukraine?':



'Compare, well, we lived much better in Ukraine. Well, we lived, we worked, we had a stable job. We both worked, so we didn't have to rent an apartment. Well, somehow, we, we lived, and here we still survive (female, 27 years old).

In terms of interaction with different municipal institutions, especially with the **Job Centres**, feedback from the study's participants varies, but often there is a feeling of resentment regarding the lack of support from Job Centres, pointing out that they are focused mainly on controlling eligibility for access to Universal Credit and not much towards helping with finding jobs:



'...you can use a very good British word "useless", because they didn't help me find a job and rather, they even distracted me. That is, I understand that the Job Centre basically exists to control that people will not receive Universal Credit straightforwardly' (female, 23 years old).

Some young people proved to be very active in finding jobs without the Job Centres' support. One of the participants opened her business getting some grant support.

Most of the participants in the research were not aware of **apprenticeship programmes**. One of the participants who applied for an apprenticeship was rejected because their visa expired before the end of the programme:



'I was refused because it is not possible to extend my visa and after the end of this apprenticeship, they expect that you will work for them for a while. ...(we don't

have enough visas and the more time goes by, the more you can't find a job because your employer doesn't even have a visa, employers don't like it' (female, 18 years old).

The research revealed that having a job was a pivotal moment for young people – it helped to improve their life conditions and well-being:



'Because I understand that a person who has a job, after all, the material situation has a great impact on the emotional state. ... When you have a job, you live more or less normally. ...[without a job] you won't have anything to pay rent there or something like that.'

Some Ukrainians try to **work remotely** in Ukraine in order to keep highly qualified jobs if the company allows, but even here there are difficulties with taxation:



'Resigned due to tax issues. That is, six months after staying abroad, we cease to have a Tax Residence in Ukraine. And accordingly, we have a British Tax Residence. Therefore, my company could no longer hire me, so to speak. And I had to resign' (female, 25 years old).

The study also revealed that many young people do a lot of **volunteering work**. As one of the participants shared:



'I volunteer for Ukrainians in Birmingham and help different organisations to prepare various events. ... Also, I started community work in a church and help with my graphic designer skills for the broader community not only Ukrainians' (female, 22 years old).

In addition to recognised volunteering work, young Ukrainian people are involved with a lot of unpaid work such as helping parents interpret meetings with officials, health services, doing paperwork with them, etc.

Health care

Health care access

While Ukrainians can access the NHS, they are facing the same issues as most UK residents, including long waits for a hospital appointment, test, or to start receiving medical treatment.²⁰ Their access to existing Ukrainian medical plans, if there are any, is also affected by difficulties in recognising diagnoses, procedures and prescriptions issued in Ukraine.

This quote reflects the experiences of many people:



'I received a referral for an examination three months later... Three months later, I appeared for an examination. They examined me there, did some tests there too... And told me that my GP would have the results in two weeks. It was the month of August. I haven't heard from anyone since then [December]. Apparently, there is no asthma. But it's not for sure [smiles]. That's my experience' (female, 25 years old).

For those who have experienced war and displacement, and often lack a supportive social network in a new country, long periods of waiting can worsen their well-being, increasing uncertainty and anxiety. The lack of action or information about the causes of their symptoms or any prognosis further exacerbates their situation. As one of the participants stressed: **'Here you can wait for months, sometimes even years. Well, you can die here, and no one will notice'** (male, 26 years old).

The research showed that making an appointment with a GP is difficult due to language barriers and a lack of understanding of how the system works. The need to book appointments by phone or via an app further

compounds these issues. Some Ukrainians with chronic or long-term illness face challenges in continuing treatment in the UK as doctors do not consider diagnoses made in Ukraine, and do not prescribe medication which were prescribed in Ukraine. In some cases this even leads people to bring medicine from Ukraine:



'I had a prescription for me in Ukraine from a doctor, but here I immediately took these pills from Ukraine so that here it would be very difficult to explain why [there is a] Ukrainian prescription' (male, 19 years old).

The monitoring for long-term conditions in some case is not possible in the UK as a 29-year-old mother shared:



'Our child had a plastic cyst in his head at birth. Yes, we monitored this cyst there in Ukraine, we monitored it there, and after a year we had to do, as you know, a control ultrasound. Well, healthcare in Ukraine and in England are two different things... And here it was difficult to go to the GP and he did not understand. He understood us, but for him it was not a reason to send the child for examination. He didn't want to do it.' (female, 29 years old).

In similar vein, another participant noted that doctors refused to monitor a tumour in their older mother. These issues often compel people to seek healthcare in Ukraine or Poland, which again exposes them to risks and does not facilitate ongoing monitoring of their health conditions.

Mental health

The issue of psychological health among Ukrainians is notably acute due to several factors: many fled the war, leaving loved ones behind or even losing them; the challenges

²⁰ Nationally, 11% of the surveyed UK residents reported 7-11 months wait, 7% - 12-18 months wait, and 6.9 over 18 months wait. See: Office for National Statistics (2024) [NHS waiting times, 16 January to 15 February 2024](#).

of adapting to a new environment with a different language and culture; and difficulties in securing housing and employment, among others. In addition to these challenges, Ukrainians also contend with feelings of guilt for leaving their country, relatives, and friends behind. Also, access to mental health help is problematic because of the long wait for services and the lack of cultural sensitivity among mental health professionals:



'My sponsor found out about free psychological help for Ukrainians.... So, I completed an application. They only came back to me after two or three months. But then I already did not need that help' (female, 22 years old).



Some participants mentioned that they did not feel that British mental health professionals understand the issues related to war trauma and overall are lacking in cultural sensitivity. Two out of three participants had to approach mental health professionals online in Ukraine or Ukrainian psychotherapists in the UK. For example, one of the participants shared that she addressed well-being support at a workplace, but then after two or three meetings, she stopped it:



'I realised that I do not want to approach psychological help in Britain as when you

need psychological help, you need some level of understanding from a person – a level of understanding of the situation, some level of empathy. And for those people who faced war, well, there is no such level of empathy from people who did not have such an experience. Accordingly, for me, these meetings were ineffective, and they were short... - you have 30 minutes, not a second more. They can interrupt you and say "see you next time". And I had to give up on this idea and found an Ukrainian psychotherapist here' (female, 25 years old).

Social isolation also affects young people's well-being as their social circle is smaller than in Ukraine. Still, the risk of not being able to stay in this country due to uncertainty about legal status makes people worry about losing new friends and having to start everything from scratch again. Uncertainty regarding the length of their stay in the UK causes a great sense of anxiety for Ukrainians, as it is difficult to plan anything, and it is extremely challenging for children. As a mother of school-age children who participated in the Citizens UK listening event, mentioned:



'Children are settled at school, they have friends. They are happy now. They have already left their friends in Ukraine, and it would be difficult to do it again. My fear is [that we may have] to start everything again.'

Hospitality versus hostility

Overall, the study participants felt welcomed in the UK. They appreciated the support and welcome they received both from their hosts and in some daily encounters. One of the participants who initially fled to Czechia, mentioned that they felt more welcomed in the UK particularly because of the understanding of the language difficulties that displaced people face:



'If you have to go to a doctor in Czechia... and they do not speak English or Ukrainian, there is no interpreter. Here... they can call to the special line to an interpreter. ... Then I really got an impression that the state is not against migrants and refugees. ... and people do care. And, overall, I think since the war started, I felt it for the first time, that people do care' (female, 29 years old).

However, almost everyone in the study group experienced 'othering' from both officials and ordinary people here is a lack of understanding about why people return to Ukraine. However, since men are not allowed to leave Ukraine, the only option Ukrainian refugees have to see their partners is to visit Ukraine. Additionally, some need to check on their elderly parents. While there are no restrictions on mobility, some officials make negative comments in this regard, making people feel very uncomfortable and unwelcomed. One of the female participants shared her experience of returning from Ukraine:



'There was such a thing [condemnation] once at the airport at passport control. It was the last time I flew from Ukraine, well, I was flying from Poland at that time, hmm, it's just that a woman at passport control, she

looked at all my documents ... and said, why are you going to Ukraine if you are here? You were sheltered here; so you have to sit here.' (female, 27 years old).

At the same time, such a 'bespoke' programme for hosting Ukrainians and providing them with freedom of movement, the right to work and apply for benefits is considered to be racially selective (not only in the UK but within international refugee law as well²¹). The inequality created by the UK government for displaced people from different countries, negatively impact on social cohesion, creating othering and tensions. An interviewee reported an instance where one case worker expressed his negative views towards Ukrainians:



'...my "case worker" is Afghani and we once discussed that there are difficulties with assimilation here, and he says, well, it's much easier for you, you are white Europeans and it's easier for you "But when I arrived in the UK, everyone looked questionably and crookedly". I understand that they also did not come from a good life... Well, I'm very sorry for how his life turned out, but it's not my fault and accusing me of being a different nation, but this is also a kind of racism, and "racism towards white people doesn't exist" [in law], so we're closing our eyes on this' (female, 28 years old).

Often Ukrainians experience hostility in daily encounters when people say that Ukraine is to blame in the war, and 'you need to go back to your country' which is added to the UK anti-migrant rhetoric which has become persistent over the last decade.

21 See: Jackson, S.M. (2024) Ukrainian Racial Contracting and the Geopolitics of Welcome in International Refugee Law. [Race, Racism & International Law](#). Forthcoming, SSRN.

Future aspirations and legal status problems

Most young Ukrainians would like to stay in the UK

With time passing by, there are fewer and fewer Ukrainians who want to return to Ukraine while approximately two-thirds from our study would like to stay in the UK. However, the mobility strategies are broader than just to stay or return as 20% of the young people we interviewed are undecided and going to 'play it by ear' without any firm plans, though they might consider moving to a different country (see Figure X).

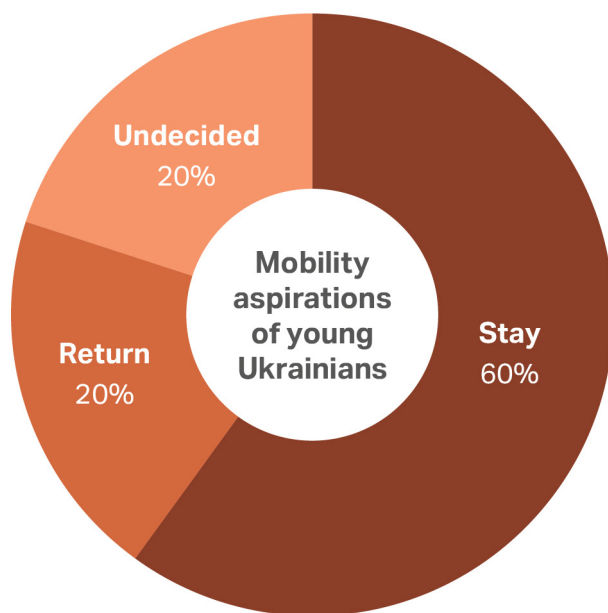


Figure X. Mobility aspirations of young Ukrainians

Return to Ukraine: family reunion and belonging

Emotions and the sense of belonging were the leading factors for those who would like to return to Ukraine. As one of the female participants stressed, 'I have a very strong love for Ukraine, so I don't know what should happen for my vision to change to this.' (female, 19 years old).

Despite the economic challenges, the rootedness and prior experience make life in Ukraine much easier for some of the participants. As another female participant mentioned:



'...Ukraine is your home; it is your city. You know everything there, there your house, your relatives, your acquaintances. Everything is somehow easier there, simpler...' (female, 18 years old).

Women who arrived in the UK with children while their male partners are not allowed to leave Ukraine also consider returning when it would be safe to reunite the family, though some find it is difficult given how their children have started to get used living in the UK and adapted to local schools, etc.

A few people mentioned that they see themselves as supporting Ukraine's recovery after the war. One participant mentioned choosing to do an undergraduate degree in bio-engineering first to support the needs of people wounded during the war:



'I would first consider that I will study here as a bioengineer and make prostheses, as I understand that it will be in great demand in my country during the war, after the war, and this work will always be relevant, especially in a post-war country (male, 22 years old).

Uncertainty of (post)war situation and economic instability prevents young people from considering a return to Ukraine

There was not just one factor which would make young Ukrainian people decide to stay in the UK, but a combination of several ones, including economic and social factors, the lack of visions of stability in Ukraine post-war, and loss of

homes especially for those who arrived in the UK from currently occupied territories.

Emigration from Ukraine was common before 2014 due to economic factors and has grown since 2014 as many people had to flee war-torn Donetsk and Lugansk oblasts of Ukraine.²² The UK provides better prospects for many young people. As one of the participants noted, **'In Ukraine I used to live in a small town [20 thousand people], and there were not any prospects, but here I have some prospects'** (female, 17 years old). The wish of some to receive HE also provides a factor to stay in the UK, because, **'Great Britain has one of the best education systems in the world, and you can be anyone here'** (male, 19 years old).



The economic reasoning is closely related to all uncertainty connected with the war and what the post-war situation will mean. As one of the participants stressed:



'First, what would motivate me to return to Ukraine is the end of war. Secondly, ... it is work and salary, and of course, prices, as prices in Ukraine are comparable with those in England, but the salary in Ukraine

[monthly] is the same as one day's salary in UK .. (or for three or two days)' (female, 28 years old).

This is echoed by another participant, who responding to the question 'What challenges would you expect when you return to Ukraine?', commented **'The possibility of not having a normal job, not the ability to pay for yourself'** (female, 25 years old).

Rootedness in social life and education are other motivators to stay in the UK

Many young people have started to adapt to life in the UK. Those who studied in secondary schools and started HE feel more settled and even have a sense of belonging to the country. Also, after going through the whole process of learning new rules, going through complicated and long procedures for renting housing, getting a job, plus learning the language, many people do not really want to start all over again, and have to return to Ukraine or move to another country. As one of the participants mentioned:



'...initially we planned to come here for a short period, but in practice, we are here already two years ... In fact, we are here for two years, and started to have social relations and financial stability, our child attends school and is socialising. So, we are thinking what to do after our visa expiries' (male, 29 years old).

The prospect of a return to Ukraine seems a challenging event when we discussed the post-war scenarios as after several years

22 Libanova, E. (2018) *External migration of Ukrainians: scale, causes, consequences*. *Journal of Demography and Social Economy*, 2(33), 11–26; Malynovska O. (2020) *Mizhnarodna Mhratsiia Naseleattia Ukrainy za Roky Nezalezhnosti*, in: M. Denysenko, S. Strottsa, M. Lait (eds), *Mhratsiia z Novykh Nezalezhnykh Derzhav. Suspiilstva ta Politychni Poriadky v Perekhidnyi Period*, pp. 169–185. Cham: Springer.

spent abroad, people feel that they might not reintegrate:



'Perhaps something has changed there and it is already difficult to understand why, because we left one country and will return to another' (male, 19 years old).

People from areas highly physically affected by war and the occupied territories and men are the most vulnerable in the UK when the visa ends

Two categories of displaced Ukrainians are at higher risk than others if they return to Ukraine while the conflict is ongoing: males and people from the occupied territories of Ukraine. All males between 18 and 60 years old are eligible for conscription in Ukraine²³ (with a few health or work-related exceptions). Many men and transgender women (gender is often not reassigned in official documents in Ukraine) do not want to go back to Ukraine because of forced recruitment to the army: once in Ukraine, they may not be allowed to leave. Some families only left Ukraine because their sons were about to turn 18 and they wanted to avoid conscription. Forced recruitment of adults is not contrary to international law; however, it can still be considered a form of gender-based violence,²⁴ which leads thousands of people to leave Ukraine through irregular routes.²⁵

People's concern is that even when it would be considered safe to go back to Ukraine, Russia's

military threat will lead to compulsory military service:



'Yes, the main condition is the end of the war, but maybe something else can happen or you can go, but it will be something very important, because now if a guy goes to Ukraine, he goes in one direction' (male, 22 years old).

During 2022 alone, over 149,000 residential buildings, 3,000 educational buildings, and a huge amount of transport and civil infrastructure have been destroyed in Ukraine²⁶ due to the war, especially in occupied territories and in areas of active bombing. With over 3.5 million²⁷ internally displaced people in Ukraine and already overwhelmed housing, education and welfare sectors, returnees, who have already lost their homes due to the war, may face marginalisation and increased vulnerabilities. Young people from the occupied territories feel themselves in limbo and do not see any prospects or future in returning:



'I really would like to go back home, but my home does not exist anymore' (female, 26 years old);



'Before I wanted to go to Kharkiv to study in Ukraine, but I don't see any prospects there anymore. My hometown is occupied, I don't see any prospects there, so now it's Britain' (female, 17 years old).

A male participant from Crimea pointed out the lack of any support from the Ukrainian

23 Reuters. (2023) [Ukraine tells military-age citizens to 'overcome their fear' in recruitment campaign](#). August 17, 2023.

24 Carpenter, R.C. (2006) [Recognizing Gender-Based Violence Against Civilian Men and Boys in Conflict Situations](#). *Security Dialogue*, 37(1), 83–103.

25 Carpentier, S. (2023) [The Missing Piece: Lessons from Ukraine for Integrating Masculinities in Women, Peace and Security](#). Global Observatory.

26 Kyiv School of Economics. (2023) [The total amount of damage caused to Ukraine's infrastructure due to the war has increased to almost \\$138 billion](#). Ukraine

27 IOM (2024). [Ukraine](#).

government which would help them to integrate in the government territories of Ukraine:



'I do not have any home which Ukraine would provide me as a the former resident of Crimea I do not have any jobs, any prospects, rather than to be killed at the frontline' (male, 22 years old).

The issue of legal status and citizenship

Their legal status within the UK is of great concern to most of the interviewed participants – 20 out of the 30 participants admitted that they are worried about the issue of continuing their legal status in the UK. The decision of Parliament in the UK to extend visas for Ukrainians for a further 18 months still does not resolve the puzzle of a legal status for Ukrainians. In addition, Ukrainians will have the right to apply for visa extension only when they have three months of valid visa left, and this means that they will not be able to extend their fixed-term contracts for work or housing rent, and they will not be able to get any kind of credit, etc. This unnecessarily complicates the life of Ukrainians in Great Britain, and puts many of them at risk of marginalisation. Essentially it put the lives of many people 'on hold':



'We would not like to stay as refugees; we would like to continue living here and become citizens of Great Britain... [I would like] to get an education, find a job, get citizenship, and live as a British citizen, build up a family' (female, 17 years old).

Young people are changing their plans for starting a family; people do not feel confident about the future, neither in the UK nor in Ukraine, as there is not enough money and stability with housing and jobs:



'I used to want to start a family. Give birth to a child, at least one. But now I understand that if I had a child, I wouldn't be able to do all this and – and... I guess now I'm not planning to have a family, a child...' (female, 27 years old).

Ukrainians who arrived under the Ukrainian Scheme, fleeing the war, emphasise that they are not granted settled status, and the current status does not lead to citizenship or indefinite leave to remain.

Current tactics to extend visas include applying for skilled workers visas (Tier 2 visas) and global talent visas. However, those routes are quite privileged and require high qualifications and experience which many young people lack due to their age and all the issues linked to the war and displacement. As one of the participants mentioned:



'It is not easy to get a job at all. Not to mention getting the job you'll be sponsoring. So... I know what it takes to upgrade to TR-2 [Tier 2 visa]. I know what money I will need to earn for this. I know that they are now increasing some threshold as well. They raise the threshold for obtaining a TR-2. But I haven't taken any steps yet. We will hope that they will invent something for us' (female, 25 years old).

SUMMARY

While young people constitute a large number of arrivals to the UK from Ukraine (28 % of displaced Ukrainians in the UK are under 18), the current policies do not respond to the needs of youth including education and access to citizenship. Still, over two third from them would like to stay in the UK even when it will feel safe to go back to Ukraine, as both our study, and the recent data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) demonstrate.

The refugee situation is often characterized by uncertain temporalities. For younger people, having their lives on hold while spending part of their formative years in the UK, and being willing to stay and contribute to the country, such uncertainty is very damaging. Living with their lives 'on hold' without clear prospects and resources (most do not have enough work experience and qualifications to apply for a Tier 2 visa at a young age) can have unfortunate consequences. This situation represents an economic and social loss for the UK, which is already providing support to these individuals but is not utilizing their accumulated skills and social experiences gained while living in this country.

The uncertainty of the legal status to stay in the UK is the most pressing issue for displaced Ukrainians. As of 2024, Ukrainians who arrived in the UK after the start of the full-scale invasion can prolong their visa for another 18 months in 2025. However, this visa does not provide pathways for indefinite leave to remain or citizenship. Such uncertainty regarding

legal status already creates barriers in securing permanent jobs, renting accommodation, and impacts people's well-being as they feel themselves in limbo.

Returning to Ukraine is not an option for many men and people from occupied territories. Males are at particular risk if required to return to Ukraine, as all males between 18 and 60 years old are eligible for conscription. People from occupied territories and areas destroyed by the war are also especially vulnerable, having lost their assets and experienced trauma and loss. Ukraine's resources are already stretched and cannot guarantee valid compensation and reintegration, especially for those who have been displaced since 2014.

Most young Ukrainians are willing to stay in the UK and contribute to the local economies and communities. Since 2022, many young refugees have graduated from school, started higher education degrees, or begun working, and are trying to build their lives in the UK. Despite their efforts, there is little indication that their social and intellectual contributions are adequately valued. Young displaced Ukrainians face even greater challenges in finding jobs due to a lack of local work experience and limited access to job networks. Many are not able to find jobs or access pre-invasion employment categories. Women with young children face more challenges in holding down full-time jobs.

There is a lack of affordable housing while fewer hosts are available. While there are examples of excellent support

and conditions provided by the scheme, often hosts had to compensate for gaps in social welfare for Ukrainian refugees. Gender-based violence, safeguarding issues, and evictions are not uncommon. There are many barriers to renting accommodation apart from the systematic lack of housing in the UK, linked with the requirements to provide a guarantor, a long-term stable income, and a long-term visa.

Schooling is available but lacks cultural sensitivity. The UK school curriculum in history and art still has a Moscow- and Russia-centric approach, lacking understanding of the diversity and colonial relations between Moscow and other regions that constituted Russia's empire and the USSR.

Level 3 and Higher Education qualifications are available, but information needs to be more accessible. Ukrainians face barriers in accessing Level 3 and HE qualifications, which often leads to underemployment and unemployment. Overall, as our research demonstrated, these challenges negatively affect young people's well-being and create barriers to their integration and adaptation in the UK. In most cases, young people lack information about the different educational and professional training pathways in the UK. Graduates of Ukrainian HE are not able to apply for student finance to receive undergraduate degrees in the UK.

Young Ukrainians face underemployment, while parents with younger children are more vulnerable in the job market. Young displaced Ukrainians face even greater challenges in finding jobs due to additional barriers such as language differences, lack of local work experience, and limited access to job networks. Also, as our study revealed, many Ukrainians are not able to find jobs or access pre-invasion employment categories. Women with young children face more challenges in holding down full-time jobs as they often come without their

partners since most men are not allowed to leave Ukraine.

Health care and mental health care support need to be more trauma-oriented and culturally sensitive. While Ukrainians can access the National Health Service (NHS) – and face the same issues as most UK residents, including long waits for hospital appointments, tests, or to start receiving medical treatment – there are problems in continuing any existing medical plans. It is difficult for the UK NHS to gain knowledge of diagnoses, procedures, and prescriptions issued in Ukraine. The refugees' mental health needs are not addressed because of long waiting times and often a lack of cultural sensitivity. Uncertainty regarding their status causes a great sense of anxiety for Ukrainians as it is difficult to plan anything, and it is extremely challenging for children.

Some young Ukrainians experience othering and hostilities from migrants and host communities. This is linked to a lack of awareness about Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine and its causes, misconceptions about the privileges Ukrainians have compared to other displaced populations, and Eastern Europeanism in relation to Ukrainian refugees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Legal status in the UK

To the UK government: Following the Citizens UK Manifesto 2024,²⁸ create pathways to citizenship for Ukrainians that will enable them to stay after their visa expired.

Nationally and locally via authorities and civic society organisations:

Provide Ukrainian communities with information about the application process for the visa extension for the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme and other routes to prolong their stay in the UK.

Housing

Launch an awareness campaign to attract more hosts for displaced Ukrainians.

Ensure hosts have necessary checks in addition to DBS to host vulnerable women and children.

Ensure that displaced Ukrainians are aware of urgent support available in case of violence and safeguarding issues.

Develop and disseminate the Homes for Ukraine Intercultural Guidance being developed by UoB researchers that will enable better understanding between hosts and guests.

Following the Healthier Housing Partnership recommendations,²⁹ ensure that all occupiers have homes that do not present a risk to health and safety.

Provide guarantor letters for Ukrainians renting private accommodation (local authorities).

Create an awareness campaign for letting companies about the current legal status of Ukrainians in the UK which make it impossible for them to provide all the extensive documentation required to rent accommodation.

Primary and Secondary Education

Avoid the long wait to enrol pupils in schools and ensure that schooling is statutorily accessible and prioritised for Ukrainians and other children with forced displacement experience, given that most of them have limited financial resources.

Raise awareness among teachers (in particular, in history, geography and art) about sensitivities around some topics related to Ukraine-Russia relations, and the need to address them.

Develop resources that are tailored to the curriculum and then deliver those through online CPD accredited training that would provide a de-colonial view of the history of the Russian empire and the USSR, and articulate Ukraine and other countries' fight for independence.

Re-establish GCSE and A-level exams in Ukrainian language.

Further and Higher Education

Provide guidance in accessing Level 3 and higher qualifications for Ukrainians, including apprenticeships. Organise

28 Citizens UK (2024). [Citizens UK Manifesto](#).

29 The Healthier Housing Partnership (2023) [Better Housing for Better Health](#).

webinars specifically for Ukrainians that focus on differences between the UK and Ukrainian higher education system and access to HE, and to help to construct their CVs and personal statement letters.

Recognitions of Qualifications

To the UK national agency for international qualifications and skills: Provide a fee waiver to obtain a Statement of Comparability of Ukrainian qualifications in the UK,

Provide a simplified pathway for recognition of medical qualifications from Ukraine in the UK.

Employment and benefits

Deliver a campaign to raise awareness and sensitivity among employers about formerly displaced youth (including those from Ukraine) looking for jobs as their work experience might be fragmented and limited and different from expectations of similarly-aged British youth.

Create a scheme for Ukrainian youth and displaced youth from other countries for work experience and internships in various industries.

Create an informational campaign aimed at informing young people about volunteering opportunities, disseminated in Ukrainian, via social media, schools, NGOs, Job centres and community centres.

Make local support available that would focus on young single parents from Ukraine looking for remote or part-time jobs (via NGOs and Job centres).

Make it possible for students enrolled in Ukrainian HE but residing in the UK to apply for Universal Credit.

Health care access

Create an awareness-raising campaign about trauma-sensitive approaches for working

with patients from Ukraine and other war-torn countries.

Provide training and employment opportunities for Ukrainian-speaking mental health experts working with the displaced population from Ukraine.

Ensure availability of Ukrainian-speaking interpreters in health care and mental health services.

Consider recognising medical notes and test results issued in Ukraine.

Attitudes towards Ukrainian displaced people in host communities

Prevent hate speech. Work on myth-busting and preventing negative stereotyping among the migrants and host communities.

Raise awareness about how the war on Ukraine is causing ongoing civilian death and mass population displacement.

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