



A positive future for EU citizens in the UK

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UKRAINE CHILDREN CAN JOIN PARENTS IN THE UK

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has this morning issued new guidance to say that under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, Ukrainian parents can sponsor their own children to join them in the UK.

This overturns a rule change brought in without warning in February 2024 which prevented Ukrainian parents from bringing children left behind in Ukraine to join them here.

Parents who had left children temporarily with grandparents while they found work and a place to live in the UK were caught unawares by the change.

As time went on, some risked bringing their children to join them by illegal routes rather than leave them in danger.

Two lawyers working for our charity Settled – British lawyer Naqeeb Sadiq and Ukrainian lawyer Yuliia Ismail - have worked tirelessly and with great determination to support affected families, present their cases and seek a change in policy. Letters sent to ministers can be seen [here](#) and [here](#). We are extremely thankful for the news today.

Since February 2024 Settled has supported over 100 affected families that have asked for our help. In seven cases we completed applications for the child naming the parent as the sponsor even though this was not allowed under the rules. One family which was highlighted in [The Independent](#) was allowed to bring their child to the UK but the other visa applications have been gathering dust with no decision on their cases until now.

Today provides fresh hope for those families.

Lawyer Naqeeb Sadiq said: “At Settled, we have always been clear that last February’s unannounced policy change to the humanitarian scheme for Ukrainians was detrimental to family reunification. We knew it would drive parents separated from their children stranded in Ukraine towards irregular and dangerous migration routes to reunite with them. We are grateful to the Home Office, and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, for listening to our concerns. Restricting the ability to sponsor children to only those who are able to find a British or settled sponsor drives migrant exploitation and runs counter to the Home Office’s objective of reducing irregular migration.”

Yuliia Ismail said: “We ask that the Home Office now acts quickly to decide outstanding applications from children stuck in Ukrainian conflict zones some of which have been in limbo for almost a year. We further ask that a legal route is opened to enable Ukrainian children who have already arrived in the UK to regularise their immigration status in line with status given to the parents.”

Settled’s CEO Kate Smart said, “Ever since the policy change was announced last February Settled knew the heartache and risk it created, and our team responded vigorously. We owe thanks to our lawyers have worked so hard to support these Ukrainian families.”

Settled also thanks Independent journalist Andy Gregory for his part in bringing attention to this issue.

The new guidance explains the steps that parents can now take: “The parent or legal guardian should complete the [Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme visa application form](#) on behalf of their child, naming themselves as ‘sponsor’. When asked about their immigration status on the visa application form, the parent or legal guardian should choose ‘none of the above’ and provide further information regarding their permission in the UK, including the date of issue and expiry, in the text box following this question. They should also mention that they are the parent or legal guardian sponsoring their child.”

-ENDS-

Editor Notes

NOTE: The new guidance can be found here: [Children being sponsored by a parent or legal guardian: Homes for Ukraine: Guidance for councils on the eligibility and applications process for children being sponsored by a parent or legal guardian.](#)

Settled is in contact with affected families and interviews may be possible.

For more information, and interviews, please contact:

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<https://settled.org.uk/>

<https://bsky.app/profile/settled.bsky.social>

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(1) About Settled

Settled is a charity set up in 2019 to help EU citizens living in the UK whose rights were affected by Brexit. We worked hard to ensure as many as possible secured their immigration status before the deadline in June 2021, so that their lives here could continue. We now continue to provide information, advice and support to EU citizens, including people who are late applying to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS), or who have had their application refused. We also help when people are struggling to prove their immigration status or access rights and services. These can include the right to bring family members to join them in the UK, and to access welfare benefits, healthcare, etc.

Since March 2022, we also provide advice on Ukraine visa schemes. This Ukraine service covers immigration rights and broader rights of housing, education, etc. Settled is one of the few charities that provide free, expert legal advice and support to Ukrainians across the UK. The Ukraine team is managed by Naqeeb Sadiq, Senior Immigration Adviser, who works closely with Yuliia Ismail, our accredited immigration adviser (OISC level 2), and Inna Rohoman, an Ukrainian herself with lived experience who is our Outreach & Comms Officer (Ukraine Advice service). The team is supported by Ukrainian volunteers and Settled's wider team of migration lawyers. Where appropriate we escalate complex or very delayed cases to the UK Home Office. From February 2024 to January 2025, our small staff team have supported 513+ Ukraine cases. Of these, 105 cases were related to children

Settled is accredited to give immigration advice at OISC Level 3. We have a small staff team of coordinators and lawyers, and a network of 100+ dedicated volunteers based throughout the UK. Our staff and volunteers speak over 20 European languages, including Romanes for our dedicated Roma service, and Ukrainian. We always try to respond in beneficiaries' preferred language if possible.