

GC32982
11 March 2022



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr John Bright
Via email

Dear Mr Bright,

Thank you for contacting me about the support the Home Office is providing to Ukrainian nationals.

The dramatic and grave events in Ukraine are in all our minds, and as we watch the news unfold, all our thoughts will be with those who are immediately affected by them. Many of my constituents have written to me about the plight of the Ukrainian people – and I am touched by how many have selflessly offered to open their homes to those in need. I am very grateful to Lydford Parish Council for raising local concerns about the speed and effectiveness of Home Office support for those seeking to leave Ukraine.

While implementing it swiftly has posed challenges, the Government is establishing a humanitarian sponsorship pathway — the Local Sponsorship Scheme for Ukraine — which will open up a route to the UK for Ukrainians who may not have family ties with the UK but who are able to match with individuals, charities, businesses, and community groups. There will be no limit on this scheme, and the UK will welcome as many Ukrainians who wish to come and have matched sponsors. Those who come under this scheme will be granted leave for an initial period of 12 months, and will be able to work and access public services.

Further details on the scheme will be published very soon, including information on how people and organisations in the UK can apply to be sponsors. I understand that my ministerial colleagues will be setting ambitious targets for the number of offers, and will liaise with other accommodation providers, such as councils and housing associations, to meet them.

The Home Office has waived normal requirements for salary or language tests, and no longer requires Ukrainians with passports to go to a Visa Application Centre to give their biometrics before they come to the UK. Instead, once their application has been considered and appropriate checks have been completed, they will receive direct notification that they are eligible for the Scheme and can come to the UK. In short, Ukrainians with passports will be able to get permission to come to the UK fully online and will be able to give their biometrics once in Britain.

In light of the concerns raised by Lydford Parish Council, I shall write forthwith to my colleague, the Home Secretary, to enquire what policies are in place to ensure that the Local Sponsorship Scheme for Ukraine will be effective once operational. As soon as I am in receipt of a response, this shall be forwarded to you.

If there are any issues arising from the response which you wish to pursue further, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. Cox'.

Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Cox QC MP
(dictated by Geoffrey Cox but signed in his absence)

I will treat as confidential all personal information you give to me or to my staff. I may need to pass on this information to others so that they can help you. I undertake to handle the information you give me in line with requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation. For more information, visit www.geoffreycox.co.uk/privacy.