



March 2022

Dear Constituent,

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

The Russian attack on Ukraine is an unprovoked and anti-democratic act of aggression and I am appalled by the conduct of Putin's expansionist regime. The situation in Ukraine remains deeply concerning so I welcome the work the Home Office has been doing over the course of recent weeks in anticipation of an invasion to stand up a comprehensive package of support for those fleeing Ukraine, and Ukrainian nationals already in the UK.

The situation is developing quickly, and so the Government must evolve its plans to adapt. I therefore welcome the new expansive Ukrainian Family Scheme which will enable British nationals and Ukrainians already settled in the UK to bring a wider group of family members to the country, extending eligibility to parents, grandparents, adult offspring and siblings. This generous offer broadens the original package beyond immediate family members which formed part of the first phase of the Government's humanitarian response.

Those joining family in the UK will be granted leave for an initial period of 12 months and will be able to work and access public funds.

Where family members of British nationals do not meet the usual eligibility criteria – but pass security checks – UK Visas and Immigration will give them permission to enter the UK outside the rules for 12 months and is prioritising all applications.

The Government is establishing a humanitarian sponsorship pathway, 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. Those who come under this scheme will also be granted leave for an initial period of 12 months and will be able to work and access public services.

I have been informed that security and biometrics checks, which are a fundamental part of the UK's visa approval process at all Visa Application Centres worldwide, will continue to take place at an accelerated pace on all applications. Given the acute security challenges in Ukraine, Russian efforts to infiltrate and merge with Ukrainian forces, the presence of extremists on the ground and Putin's willingness to use violence on British soil, it is right that the Government continues to protect the public by maintaining these vital checks. This is a policy that has been retained consistently throughout all emergency evacuations, including in Afghanistan.

The UK Visa Application Centre in Kyiv is now closed because of the security situation in the city. Family members of British Nationals resident in Ukraine who need a UK visa can still apply through the new, temporary location in Lviv staffed by remaining government officials, or through an Application Centre in a nearby country where there is surged capacity, including in Poland, Romania, Moldova, and Hungary.



Chris Heaton-Harris

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On the 12th February, the Home Office set up a dedicated helpline on 0300 3032785 for anyone who is intending to apply under the Family Migration route to assist with making an application. This is operating on a 24/7 basis.

I am proud that Britain continues to lead and is doing its fair share in every aspect of this Ukraine conflict. Ministers have assured me that they continue to keep the Government's handling of the situation under review as it develops.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY