



49 Linden Gardens, London W2 4HG. Tel. 020 72298392
web: www.augb.co.uk email: iryna.terlecky@augb.co.uk

DISPLACED UKRAINIANS IN THE UK - THE NEED FOR CERTAINTY

AUGB POLICY STATEMENT

1. The Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain will always be grateful to the UK Government and people across the UK for creating a safe haven for Ukrainians who fled the horror of Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine. It allowed many thousands of families and children to overcome the trauma of war and start to rebuild their lives. We are also grateful that the initial 3 years of humanitarian protection has been extended by 18 months through the Ukraine Permission Extension scheme, recognising that Russia continues to wage a merciless war which has cost thousands of lives and is devastating civilian homes and infrastructure.
2. We welcome Minister Malhotra's speech responding to an adjournment debate on 21 July, where she reiterated the Government's unwavering commitment to Ukraine, affirmed that the Government is working on a further visa extension and that it is working with the Embassy of Ukraine, AUGB and international partners to reach solutions which balance responsibilities to Ukrainians on visa schemes, Ukrainian citizens more broadly and the wishes of the Ukrainian government.
3. Notwithstanding this recent announcement, there is still a pressing need for a clear strategy and mechanisms which will give displaced Ukrainians longer term certainty. Although Ukrainians have integrated well and are already making a valuable contribution to UK society, the current visa extension is still relatively short term which means that many are facing significant issues with employers and landlords who themselves are looking for longer term assurances. Children have adapted well in the UK education system, but do not know whether they will be able to complete their studies. For many children, the UK education system is the only one they know.
4. Research studies and our own consultation with AUGB branches and members clearly demonstrate the significant stress that continued uncertainty is causing, alongside the increasing practical difficulties that are impacting people's wellbeing and everyday lives.
5. Many displaced Ukrainians have nowhere to return to. Their towns and homes may have been obliterated. Some fled from regions which are currently occupied by Russia or are in active war zones. Many have no family or employment left in Ukraine.

6. We understand that the Ukrainian government would wish as many people as possible to return to help rebuild Ukraine and recognises the need to ensure that everyone should be treated fairly – those who fled the war and those who have continued their lives in Ukraine. However, we continue to see hundreds of Russian drone and missile strikes all over Ukraine, which means that nowhere is truly safe. In spite of the significant efforts of Ukraine’s allies, a just and lasting peace is not yet a certainty, and it is far from clear what peace discussions will mean for Ukraine’s territories and people.
7. In addition to the uncertainties around any peace process, Ukraine alone does not have the resources to provide housing and employment, or the social, educational and psychological support that returning Ukrainians might need, especially children.
8. In the light of these issues and complexities, the AUGB urges the UK and Ukrainian governments, together with international allies, to continue working closely together to formulate clear plans to provide long term support and certainty to displaced Ukrainians. These plans must be set within the framework of sustained support from allies to ensure that Ukraine fully restores its sovereignty and independence, while safeguarding the right of Ukrainians to freely determine their own future.
9. AUGB believes that these objectives need to be formed into an urgent and coherent plan of action which encompasses several key areas, and we stand ready to engage with government as a trusted stakeholder:
 - 9.1 Critical government decisions are needed on the criteria for the visa position after UPE. If this is to be a short term extension on humanitarian protection grounds, then this must include a clear timescale for decisions on the longer term position. This should include a path to settlement to provide certainty and clarity for displaced Ukrainians to rebuild their lives, which should take full account of the period of humanitarian protection.
 - 9.2 To avoid the problems which have arisen with the UPE process, the government should consider a much simplified process, preferably with automatic renewal and a unified end date for any extension.
 - 9.3 The needs of vulnerable groups must be at the forefront of decisions: those from occupied or destroyed territories, elderly and vulnerable people, and children who have adapted and are progressing through the UK education system, as well as those who have adapted and are making a contribution to the UK economy.
 - 9.4 Families must stay united and children who have adapted to the UK must be able to complete their education and choose where they live their lives.
 - 9.5 Other existing visa routes, together with the process of converting qualifications, need to be examined to ensure that they are accessible to allow Ukrainians to make an even greater contribution to society and the economy.

9.6 Building on the UK-Ukraine 100 year partnership agreement, a forward-looking plan supported by clear and accessible information needs to be put in place to provide confidence and pathways for those who wish to return to Ukraine and contribute to its long-term recovery and renewal. This must include mechanisms to support reintegration into the Ukrainian educational system, Ukrainian society and social cohesion. Without such a plan, supported and funded by the UK and international allies, displaced Ukrainians will not have options to enable them to make fully informed decisions about their long term future.

10. Importantly, policy development must recognise that the interests of both the UK and Ukraine will best be served if Ukrainians are able to maintain strong links to their language, culture and heritage. A strong diaspora will make a continuing contribution, not only to community cohesion in the UK, but also to rebuilding Ukraine's economy, social and civil institutions. The option of dual UK/Ukrainian citizenship will help foster continuing connections, but in addition, the Government should consider providing financial support to AUGB and other Ukrainian community groups who work with Ukrainians to strengthen both the process of integration and connection to heritage.
11. The AUGB will continue to support Ukraine's existential fight for sovereignty, independence and closer alignment with Europe in a just and lasting peace. We will continue to support the Ukrainian community, which now includes many displaced Ukrainians, and to advocate for their interests, as we have done since 1946. We will continue to support displaced Ukrainians in adapting to life in the UK, while maintaining a strong connection to their heritage and to Ukraine. We are ready to engage constructively with the UK Government to develop urgent and equitable solutions which take account of the reality in Ukraine and are in the best interests of displaced Ukrainians, UK society and Ukraine.

AUGB Board of Directors
22 August 2025