



Rt Hon Nadhim Zahawi MP
Secretary of State

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To All Local Authority Chief Executives and Directors of Children's Services
By email:

1st April 2022

Dear all,

I am extremely grateful for the warm welcome many local authorities have given to the families who arrived from Afghanistan and Hong Kong who were placed in their areas, particularly for the hard work they have demonstrated in placing children in schools and providing the support and care necessary as they adjust to their new lives in the UK. I also recognise all of the excellent work that local authorities do to support the arrival of asylum seekers, both families and unaccompanied children.

Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the displacement of millions of refugees, the UK Government has set up two schemes to support those fleeing the war, the Ukraine Family Scheme and Homes for Ukraine. These schemes offer a lifeline to those forced to flee their homes, but I recognise that this will also impact further on local authorities as these families arrive and settle into their new homes.

All children and young people arriving under these schemes have the right to access education and childcare whilst in the UK. I know from my own experience as an 11-year-old that the best place for all children to be educated is in schools and that attending school is vital to help newly arrived children integrate as quickly as possible into the communities in which they are living. Our expectation is that if there are school places available in the local area, even if not in the immediate vicinity of the family's home, the local authority will work with families arriving from Ukraine to enable the children to attend school as soon as possible.

As I have said previously, local authorities should be looking to provide places and, where necessary, use the flexibilities to admit above published admission number (PAN) and exceed the infant class size limit, as well as using the in-year Fair Access Protocol. We will write separately to all local authority school admission officers outlining the rights of refugee children from Ukraine to access a school place and use the department's Bulletin to Schools to make all schools aware.

Local authorities also have an important role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children. As with the Afghanistan resettlement, I know how committed you will be to supporting families arriving from Ukraine and I am keen that my department works in partnership with you and would like to continue to hear of any challenges you are facing.

My officials have been working closely with colleagues across government to ensure there is clear guidance about the expectations of local government, particularly in relation to identifying and managing any potential safeguarding risks. DLUHC has published [guidance](#)

[for local authorities on the Homes for Ukraine scheme](#), as well as a [frequently asked questions resource](#). For children we all know that attending school is an important protective factor.

Additionally, DLUHC has produced a [welcome pack for families arriving in the UK from Ukraine](#). Information on access to education and childcare can be found on pages 24-29.

To supplement this we have updated the Gov.uk page on [school access rights for pupils from overseas](#) and will add some questions and answers to DLUHC's [Homes for Ukraine frequently asked questions page](#).

I have a dedicated team at DfE working on support for children and young people arriving from Ukraine. If you have any questions about access to school places for children arriving from Ukraine, please contact the team at SSPO.DfE@education.gov.uk.

Finally, I will be keen to know how things are progressing, to hear of any challenges that you are encountering and, of course, to celebrate successes with you.

Thank you again for your tremendous support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Zahawi', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rt Hon Nadhim Zahawi MP
Secretary of State for Education