

Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee
Thursday 27 February 2025
7th Meeting, 2025 (Session 6)

Ukraine

1. Since March 2022 the Committee has [scrutinised the humanitarian response in Scotland to the war in Ukraine](#) with a focus on the resettlement of displaced people from Ukraine across Scotland. We have also held a roundtable on links with and support for Ukrainian culture in [November 2022](#).
2. In the week of the third anniversary of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, and against the backdrop of recent geo-political developments, we will be taking evidence from Andrii Madzianovskyi – the Consul of Ukraine in Scotland.
3. A SPICe briefing is provided at **Annexe A**.

Clerks to the Committee
February 2025

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Context

Today's meeting provides an opportunity for the Committee to discuss the crisis in Ukraine with the Consul of Ukraine, Andrii Madzianovskyi. Issues that Members may wish to explore include:

- the continuing scale of the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine.
- the nature of the international response to the crisis
- the response of the Scottish Government
- the response of the UK Government
- how people in Scotland under the Ukraine resettlement schemes are being supported

Introduction

On 24 February 2022, Russian forces launched an illegal invasion of Ukraine.

[Information on the background to the conflict can be found in a previous SPICe blog.](#)

As a result of the invasion and ongoing fighting, [figures from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees \(UNHCR\)](#) show that over 6.3 million refugees have fled Ukraine and been recorded in Europe with a further 560,000 recorded beyond Europe since February 2022.

According to the UNHCR:

“The full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has resulted in loss of life, separation of family members, loss of homes, belongings, savings and jobs. Inflation and the contracting economy place families and communities, who have been torn apart by displacement, in an increasingly precarious position. Civilian infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed, disrupting the supply and access to gas, electricity and fuel. Attacks by missiles, rockets and drones continue to pose a risk to the safety and security of millions of Ukrainians.

Approximately one-third of Ukrainians have been forced to flee their homes. Millions have been internally displaced within the country, and an even higher number displaced as refugees abroad. It is currently one of the largest human displacement crises in the world.”

UK support to Ukraine

The UK Government has published a [Factsheet illustrating the UK’s support for Ukraine](#). As of January 2025, the UK has committed £12.8 billion for Ukraine:

- £7.8 billion in military support
- £5 billion in non-military support

Included in the non-military support is just under £500 million in humanitarian support:

“the UK is providing [at least £120 million in humanitarian assistance through to the end of financial year 2024 to 2025](#), bringing our [total humanitarian contribution to £477 million](#) for Ukraine and the region since the start of the full-scale invasion.”

The humanitarian support includes:

- [£15 million, delivered through UNHCR and UNICEF, will support those most in need as temperatures in Ukraine plummet](#) (announced on 17 December 2024)
- we have provided £8.6 million to HALO Trust for demining and we have [extended HALO Trust’s contract for 2025 to 2026, providing a further £4.3 million](#) to support their work in Ukraine. Our demining efforts supported the clearance of over 350,000 square metres of land (May 2022 to September 2024)

Colleagues in the House of Commons Library have recently published [Ukraine: UK aid and humanitarian situation 2022 to 2025](#) which provides further detail on the figures provided above.

Scottish Government’s humanitarian support for Ukraine

On 20 February 2025, the Scottish Government [published a freedom of information response which included details of the humanitarian funding it has provided for Ukraine since 2022](#). I have reproduced the information below:

2022:

- HALO Trust - Mine Action Response Ukraine £160,724
- Ukraine humanitarian assistance DEC Appeal Ukraine £2,000,000
- Ukraine humanitarian assistance Red Cross Ukraine £500,000
- Ukraine humanitarian assistance SCIAF Ukraine £500,000
- Ukraine humanitarian assistance UNICEF Ukraine £1,000,000

2023:

- HALO Trust - Mine Action Response Ukraine £139,276
- Scottish Government Humanitarian Emergency Funding - Ukraine Winterisation Support Ukraine £250,000
- Scottish Government Humanitarian Emergency Funding - Ukraine Winterisation Support Ukraine £375,000
- Scottish Government Humanitarian Emergency Funding - Ukraine Winterisation Support Ukraine £375,000

The [Scottish Government's webpage on humanitarian response](#) states that in 2023 and 2024, £5.3 million in funding was provided to Ukraine for humanitarian support. It is not clear how that total sits alongside the published data provided above.

The UK Government's Ukraine Settlement Schemes.

Following the Russian invasion, the UK Government launched the Homes for Ukraine scheme and the Ukraine Family scheme¹. The Homes for Ukraine scheme allowed UK residents to sponsor displaced people from Ukraine to live with them while the Ukraine Family scheme permitted Ukrainian nationals join or stay with their relatives in the UK. A Ukraine Extension Scheme² was also introduced for persons from Ukraine who held a valid UK visa on or after January 1, 2022.

Contributing to the Homes for Ukraine scheme³, the Scottish Government introduced the Scottish Super Sponsor scheme. This scheme allowed people to apply for UK visas without needing a pre-arranged host. Under this scheme, the Scottish Government served as the sponsor and provided temporary Welcome Accommodation to people from Ukraine while long-term housing could be arranged.

Arrivals and Welcome Accommodation

Since the start of the war, 158,668 people have arrived in the UK through the various Ukraine visa schemes.⁴ Of those, 28,137 have arrived in Scotland – representing

¹ Closed 19th of February 2024.

² Closed for most new applicants 16th of May 2024.

³ Paused on the 13th of July 2022, although those who were issued visas may still travel to Scotland.

⁴ Using data received from the Home Office in November 2024: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ukraine-sponsorship-scheme-visa-data-by-country-upper-and-lower-tier-local-authority>

17.7% of the total number of arrivals (see Table 1). The Scottish Government has acted as sponsor for 21,459 of those arrivals through the Warm Scots Welcome programme.

Location	Sponsor	Number of visa applications	Number of visas issued	Number of arrivals in the UK by sponsor location
England	Sponsored by individuals	174,990	139,288	120,704
Northern Ireland	Sponsored by individuals	3,740	2,907	1,879
Scotland	Sponsored by individuals	9,994	7,951	6,678
	Sponsored by the Scottish Government	38,305	32,623	21,459
	Total	48,299	40,574	28,137
Wales	Sponsored by individuals	6,793	5,359	4,600
	Sponsored by the Welsh Government	5,348	4,621	3,348
	Total	12,141	9,980	7,948

Table 1 shows the number of arrivals from Ukraine by country. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ukraine-sponsorship-scheme-visa-data-by-country-upper-and-lower-tier-local-authority>

A key challenge for the Scottish Government has been that of moving people on from temporary Welcome Accommodation. In December 2023, the Scottish Government announced that Ukrainians already in Welcome Accommodation for six months would receive two longer term accommodation offers and, if declined, a maximum of 60 additional days in the Welcome Accommodation before being required to leave the accommodation.⁵

Visa extension

The UK Government worked closely with the Government of Ukraine to design the schemes such that people would return to Ukraine following the war. As a result, each of the schemes discussed above offered displaced people from Ukraine limited Leave to Remain in the UK for three years.⁶

However, research in Argyll and Bute⁷ highlighted concerns amongst people from Ukraine concerning the length of the three-year visas and the uncertainty this was causing amongst the population. Limited visa lengths resulted in displaced people from Ukraine adopting differing strategies; some focusing on short-term employment options and saving for a possible return to Ukraine, while others tentatively considered longer-term options – including setting up businesses, learning English and seeking means of having their qualifications recognised in Scotland.

In February 2024, the UK Government announced a new [Ukraine Permission Extension \(UPE\) scheme](#), which will provide displaced people from Ukraine who are already living in the UK through one of the aforementioned schemes an 18-month extension to their visa. The UPE was opened in February 2025 and requires visa holders to self-apply for an extension. To reflect the temporariness of the schemes and the extension, the UK Government altered the eligibility requirements for the [Long Residence](#) route of the [Immigration rules](#) such that time spent living in the UK through the Ukraine-specific visa schemes cannot be used for permission for further stay or settlement under the Long Residence route.⁸

⁵ <https://www.gov.scot/news/helping-ukrainians-into-longer-term-housing/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CThis%20announcement%20is%20the%20next,integration%20needs%20of%20displaced%20people.>

⁶ <https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/13886/pdf/>

⁷ https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s208368/AB%20Ukraine%20resettlement_UoG%20report.pdf#page=7.09

⁸ <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2024-11-26/hcws250>

Integration

Local Authorities are able to apply for tariff funding from the UK Government for the support they offer displaced people from Ukraine to integrate in Scotland. Where individuals have spent more than 13 weeks in Welcome Accommodation, the tariff funding is split between the Local Authority where they are housed and the Local Authority wherein the temporary accommodation is situated. Tariff funding is available for one year and was reduced from £10,500 to £5,900 starting from January 2023. Tariff funding has been used to increase the provision of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), employment services and welfare support. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) conducted survey work in 2022 with displaced persons from Ukraine. The research provides employment and language learning comparisons between the nations and regions of the UK.⁹ In Scotland, 41% of respondents stated that they were receiving more than one English lesson a week – compared to the UK average of 36%. In addition, 43% of respondents in Scotland stated that they had used employment services once a week – compared to the UK average of 35%. Concerning employment statistics, these can be found in Table 2.

Below are the responses for Scotland compared to the UK average:

Survey question	Scotland	UK average
Are you employed or self-employed?	52%	56%
Have you experienced any difficulties in being able to take up work in the UK?	49%	50%
<i>Among those who have experienced difficulties:</i>		
I have not been able to find childcare	15%	15%
I have limited access to required transport	17%	23%
My English language skills have not met job requirements	60%	56%
My qualifications have not been recognised / are not valid in the UK	40%	33%
I have not found a job that suits my skills	26%	28%
I have not found a job with suitable working hours	22%	22%
I have not found a job that pays enough	16%	14%

Table 2 shows ONS data concerning employment for visa holders under the Ukraine Humanitarian Schemes: 17 October to 7 November 2022

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SPICe Research