

Supporting people arriving from Ukraine

Information and resources for social care practitioners who are working with people and families from Ukraine

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Social care practitioners are increasingly likely to come into contact with people and families from Ukraine who have experienced trauma and devastation in their home country and are looking for refuge here.

Everyone has their own story and will be arriving under different circumstances, with personal experiences of grief and loss.

Here are a range of resources and approaches that might help you as you support people affected by the war in Ukraine. Where possible we have tried to direct you to the most relevant parts of what may be a wider resource.

Learn more about Ukraine

You can find a summary of Ukrainian history and culture [here](#).

The flag of Ukraine

Considering language

Duolingo has produced a [Ukrainian phrase book](#), with phrases based on their own experiences of volunteering in resettlement centres.

Prioritising people's needs

[Maslow's hierarchy of needs](#) is a useful tool to help you think about the needs of Ukrainian people who have been displaced by conflict.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs

The model is usually shown as a pyramid. On the lower levels, there are basic human needs that must be met before a person can move up to the peak of the pyramid and enjoy their full potential.

From the bottom to the top, the pyramid shows the following needs:

- physiological needs
- safety needs
- love and belonging
- esteem
- self-actualization.

For people who have been displaced, their most important needs on arrival will be practical ones such as food and warmth, accommodation, access to financial support and safety.

Moving up the hierarchy, a person will also need to build connections and engage with their new communities. This might include community groups, schools, and work opportunities.

People may need specific support and interventions because of adverse experiences and the impact of trauma. Once their more basic and fundamental needs are met, support can help a person build confidence and self-esteem, resulting in personal fulfilment.

Alongside the hierarchy of needs it's also helpful to consider [culture shock](#), and the different phases of this that people may be experiencing. It's particularly important at this time to avoid making assumptions about people's needs by having conversations to find out [what matters to them](#).

Working with sponsors

Welsh Government has published [guidance for sponsors](#) on its website. The guidance recognises sponsors' contribution and includes:

- help for sponsors to consider if hosting is right for them
- advice on preparing accommodation
- safeguarding considerations
- how to access public services
- a 24-hour helpline number: 0808 175 1508.

[Support for Displaced People in Wales in Private Accommodation](#) is a guide aimed at sponsors. It helps them consider the difficult experiences of the people they're hosting and explains where to get support.

You can use [Dewis Cymru](#), an online database of health and wellbeing services, to search for what's locally available.

Information for Ukrainians arriving in the UK

UK Government has produced a guide for Ukrainians arriving in the UK, which has advice about:

- getting used to life in the UK
- what to expect from a sponsor
- practical matters, such as opening a bank account
- accessing benefits.

The British Association of Social Workers has also put together information for Ukrainians about arriving in the UK, which has been translated into [Ukrainian](#) and [Russian](#).

Barnardo's has a [web page and a free helpline](#) staffed by English, Ukrainian and Russian speakers to support Ukrainian families arriving in the UK. They have a dedicated email address, ukrainiansupport@barnardos.org.uk, to contact them on and they can offer support with:

- therapy with a qualified psychotherapist
- advice about accessing education, health, housing, and employment
- accessing digital devices to help people stay connected.

Thinking about safeguarding

A coalition of anti-slavery and human rights groups has launched a [new website](#) for Ukrainian refugees in the UK, aimed at keeping them safe from trafficking and helping them adjust to their new home. The site is a 'one stop shop' of useful advice and is available in English, Ukrainian and Russian.

[Barnardo's](#) offers direct, specialist support to trafficked children.

Supporting children

The Children's Legal Centre based at Swansea University has produced a [best practice guide](#) for social workers who are supporting unaccompanied asylum seeking children in Wales.

They have also produced an [information booklet](#) for foster carers with helpful frequently asked questions.

Welsh Government has produced an [age assessment toolkit](#), which includes:

- guidance on different approaches, for example, Adverse Childhood Experiences
- trauma-informed approach to age assessment
- person-centred approach to age assessment.

[Promoting well-being and positive identity for a child or young person who is looked after](#) is a quick guide for social workers and social care practitioners that highlights the importance of caring relationships with skilled practitioners.

The Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team Wales offer support for [refugees](#) and for [children and young people](#).

Neath Port Talbot Council's Inclusion and Vulnerable Learners Service has put together a booklet about supporting schools during war, conflict and crises. It has practical tips and approaches for schools, parents and carers, including:

- trauma informed support guidance (pages 10 to 22)
- how to speak to children about the war (page three)
- teaching strategies and ideas for the key stages (pages four to five)
- a vulnerable learner's support plan (page seven)
- top tips to help children feel safe and acknowledge feelings (pages eight to nine)

If you would like a copy of the booklet, please [send us an e-mail](#).

This article from Community Care talks about using [play and creative arts](#) to communicate with children and young people recovering from trauma. But, there's a distinct difference between using play and creative methods to connect with children and the use of play therapy. This [article](#) explains the distinction, helping you understand when to signpost specialist support services.

Trauma informed approaches and the impact of displacement

Traumatic Stress Wales signposts to a resource produced by the National Centre for Mental Health. This gives practical advice for helping people who have experienced trauma and is available in both [English](#) and [Ukrainian](#).

The Royal College of Psychiatrists has produced a [resource](#) about coping after a traumatic event, which has information for anyone who has experienced a traumatic event, or who knows someone who has. It explains what trauma is and how you can support someone who has experienced a traumatic event.

Being forced to escape your home due to conflict can create many psychological and practical issues. This [statement from the UN](#) highlights the far reaching effects and the increased vulnerability of displaced people to trafficking and sexual violence, and encourages widened access to protection and assistance.

Cultural trauma that may be experienced by people who have escaped the conflict in Ukraine

Cultural trauma is when a group of people experience a horrendous event that can have long lasting effects on their group identity. This [paper](#) explains the potential impact, how it may pass from one generation to the next and the need to provide supportive interventions to people affected.

IMPACT Initiatives is compiling data and [tracking the experiences](#) and accounts of Ukrainian people who have been displaced, recording and sharing issues to do with rurality, language and accommodation needs.

For social workers

The British Association of Social Workers (BASW) has created a [guide](#) about the role of social workers during disasters and responding to humanitarian crises.

[Podcasts](#) called 'Voices from Ukraine' offer reflections from social workers about some of the challenges experienced and focus on disaster management.

Professional Social Work magazine and BASW have a platform to [hear from social workers](#) about how they are supporting people affected by the war in Ukraine. They want to hear how the values, ethics and skills of social work might make a difference to resolving the crisis.

Lena Dominelli, who specialises in disaster work, highlights [Social Work for Peace](#), a social work-led initiative to support people affected by the crisis. These include plans to share people's stories of displacement to make sure their experiences aren't lost.