


Ukraine Scheme - what happens after the 3-year visa ends?

The Ukraine Scheme visa provides 3 years' permission to stay in the UK. In February 2024, the government announced some significant changes. This leaflet explains what happens after three years and outlines other significant changes to the Ukraine Scheme.

1. How long is my Ukraine Scheme visa valid for?


The Ukraine Scheme visa consisted of three different routes (Homes for Ukraine, Ukraine Extension Scheme, and Ukraine Family routes). All Ukraine Scheme visas are currently valid for 3 years, regardless of which route you come through. You can find the expiration date of your visa in the Home Office email you received when your visa was granted. Alternatively, you can check the validity of your visa here: <https://right-to-work.service.gov.uk/rtw-prove/id-question> 

2. What will happen at the end of my 3 years?

On 18 February 2024, the [government announced](#) that it would allow people with a valid Ukraine Scheme visa to extend their stay for a further 18 months under a new Ukraine Permission Extension (UPE) Scheme. Applications will be open online from early 2025, and individuals will be able to make their applications within the last 3 months of an existing visa. We do not yet have any details about the process will be for making these new applications.

3. Why does my Biometric Residence Permit expire on 31 December 2024?

Some Ukrainians are worried that their Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) expires on 31 December 2024. This is because the government is planning to move proof of immigration status online. Therefore, all Biometric Residence Permits (BRPs) expire on 31 December 2024, regardless of the visa's actual expiry date.

Throughout 2024 the government will announce the process for how to prove immigration status online. You can read more here: www.lawcentreni.org/news/govt-online-immigration-evisa-announcement/ 


4. I have a Ukraine Scheme visa. Should I apply to Ukraine Extension Scheme now?

No. If you arrived in the UK through the Homes for Ukraine route, you cannot apply to the Ukraine Extension Scheme now to prolong your permission in the UK. You should wait to apply to the Ukraine Permission Extension (UPE) Scheme. Making an application now could interfere with your existing visa. **We strongly recommend that you do not attempt to do this.**

5. Can I switch to a different visa?

We know that some Ukrainians are considering 'switching' to a different visa in order to obtain a pathway to settlement. You should consider the implications very carefully and are strongly advised to seek specialist immigration advice before making a new visa application.

- Some Ukrainians may be eligible to apply for a Skilled Worker visa. This visa is expensive (the visa costs £1500 and there is an additional £1035 annual healthcare cost). This visa does not permit you or your dependants to receive social security benefits such as Universal Credit or homeless assistance from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE).
- Some Ukrainians have applied for asylum. Claiming asylum has a number of far-reaching implications. For example, if you claim asylum and are subsequently granted refugee status, you will not be able to return to Ukraine including for visits.
- Some Ukrainians may be eligible to apply for permission to stay because they have a family member who is British, Irish, EEA or settled in the UK.

Make sure you only obtain immigration advice from professional, qualified advisers. All immigration advisers must be registered with either [OISC](#) or the [Law Society](#).

What else has changed?

- **Closure of Ukraine Family Scheme**


On 19 February 2024, the Ukraine Family Scheme closed to new applications.

- **Changes to Homes for Ukraine Scheme**

New applications can continue to be made to the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, however, successful applicants will now be granted a 18-month visa rather than 3-year visa. At the end of that initial 18 months, individuals may be eligible to apply to the Ukraine Permission Extension scheme for a further 18 months leave.

There are also changes to who is eligible to be sponsors under the Homes For Ukraine route. From now on, sponsors must be either a British or Irish citizen, or must have permanent residence in the UK. Unfortunately, this means that Ukraine Scheme visa holders are no longer permitted to be sponsors.

What should I do?

It is very important that you know when your visa will expire and prepare accordingly. You can check the validity of your visa here: <https://right-to-work.service.gov.uk/rtw-prove/id-question>.

It is your responsibility to apply to extend your visa **before** your current leave expires.

Check Law Centre NI and Migration Justice Project website or follow us on social media as we will provide updates on the UPE Scheme as they are announced. We may also be able to help you make the necessary applications in due course.