



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

June 2022

*Dear Constituents*

Thank you for your email about the support the Home Office is providing to Ukrainian nationals.

My thoughts are with the Ukrainian people and President Zelensky, whose defiance, courage and patriotism in the face of foreign aggression is inspiring. President Putin has unleashed a full-scale invasion of Ukraine by land, sea and air. This is a premeditated and wholly unprovoked attack on a sovereign democratic state.

The UK and allies have been clear all along that there would be a severe cost for any further Russian military incursion into Ukraine. I commend the global leadership shown by the Prime Minister in support of Ukraine over these past months, and the leading role he has played in encouraging the West to impose the most severe and coordinated package of sanctions Russia has ever faced in response to Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine. I also welcome the work the Home Office has been doing over the course of recent weeks in anticipation of an invasion to stand up a comprehensive package of support for those fleeing Ukraine, and Ukrainian nationals already in the UK.

The situation is developing quickly, and so the Government has to evolve its plans to adapt. I welcome the expansive Ukrainian Family Scheme which allows family members of British nationals, UK settled persons and certain others to come or stay in the UK. Those joining the Scheme will be granted leave for three years and will be able to work and access public funds. The Scheme is also free and does not include any salary or language requirements.

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Ukrainians already in the UK can either extend their visa or switch to another immigration route, where eligible, even if their visa does not normally allow them to do so. Guidance on the support available to Ukrainian nationals and their family members can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/support-for-family-members-of-british-nationals-in-ukraine-and-ukrainian-nationals-in-ukraine-and-the-uk>

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Furthermore, I warmly welcome the launch of the new 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme which will allow individuals, charities, community groups and businesses in the UK to bring Ukrainians to safety - including those with no family ties with the UK. I understand that individual sponsors will be asked to provide homes or a spare room rent-free for as long as they are able, with a minimum stay of six months. In return, they will receive £350 per month. Ukrainians arriving in the UK under this scheme will be granted three years' leave to remain, with entitlement to work, and access benefits and public services. For information on how to record your interest in the scheme, please search: <https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk/>

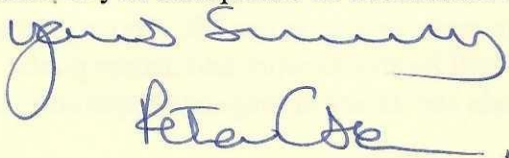
I am especially troubled by reports that desperate Ukrainians who have left their homes have struggled to access the generous support provided by the Government. It is vital that they can do so as quickly as possible. It is encouraging that the Minister for Safe and Legal Migration has updated Parliament on the measures the Government is taking to expedite applications. I am pleased to confirm that staff have been surged to key visa application centres across Europe, particularly Poland, and more biometric kit has been moved to support them. Supporting this work from the UK, the Home Office has put casework teams on standby to process applications to prevent delays.

Ministers have assured me that they continue to keep the Government's handling of the situation under review as it develops. Naturally this is a constantly changing situation, but please be assured that I am following all developments closely and supporting the Government in their actions to support Ukraine and the Ukrainian people.

The situation is an unfolding one and the Government have made a number of changes in just the last week. This letter was prepared on the date shown above but may be subject to changes after it was printed.

My office has already assisted a number of Darlington families affected by this situation and we stand ready to assist anyone coming forward who needs assistance.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Peter Gibson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

PETER GIBSON MP