

A guide for Ukrainian refugees seeking work in Bristol

Updated 20/1/23

(latest changes in RED)

This guide is meant to provide information to help Ukrainian refugees in Bristol to seek work and explain what benefits may be available to claim before they find a job. This document supplements the comprehensive "[General Information Guide For Ukrainian Refugees and Hosts](#)" on the Redland Ukraine Response - Welcome Hub Team website.

1. Pre-requisites for work

Once a visa to stay in the UK is obtained, the first pre-requisite for being able to work in the UK is a [Biometric Residence Permit](#) (BRP). This extends your stay for up to 3 years. Details of how to obtain this are in the [Guide](#). Strictly speaking, guests do NOT need to have a Biometric Residence Permit in order to work. The passport visa stamp is proof that they can work in the UK. Unfortunately, many employers, including recruitment agencies, are not aware of this and are insisting on a BRP. For this reason, if your guests are hoping to find work, it makes sense for them to get a BRP as soon as possible.

It is also necessary to have a [right to work share code](#) so that an employer can verify the individual's right to work. This code should be given to an employer once work has been found. Any Ukrainian wanting to apply for a job must have a BRP and a share code.

An employer may also ask for your National Insurance Number (NINO) even though the rules say a BRP and share code should now suffice. Your National Insurance number may already be printed on the back of your BRP. If not, you can [apply for a NINO here](#) – you should have your passport and smartphone ready. The helpline is 0800 141 2079.

Your National Insurance number will be used to record any liability for tax and National Insurance contributions once you have started work.

For some jobs it may also be necessary to have passed certain checks such as DBS clearance or CSCS for working on construction sites. These requirements will be job-specific.

2. First steps when unemployed

In terms of finding jobs, the JobCentre Plus (JCP) at 100 Temple Street Bristol, BS1 6AG is the place to go to when unemployed and looking for work. (This office is now the only JCP in Bristol.) The telephone No. is 0800 169 0190.

In the UK the process of finding jobs is often linked to claiming benefits as a **jobseeker** – you are expected to look for work as well as receive benefits. **Universal Credit** is the main benefit for people who are looking for work. Universal Credit (UC) is one of the benefits paid by the UK government's Department of Works and Pensions (DWP).

Ukrainian refugees are entitled to apply for Universal Credit (UC) as soon as they arrive. The usual requirements for 3 month residency in the UK have been waived for Ukrainian refugees who are granted a visa by the UK government.

Universal Credit must first be claimed [online here](#). If you want assistance in this, Citizens Advice provides a free confidential [Help to Claim service](#) which will help claimants go

through the initial claiming process. You must have a bank account, email address, mobile phone and NINO to apply (although a NINO can be triggered by the benefit claim).

Universal Credit (UC) is a means-tested benefit so any income you receive will be assessed to see what payment you are entitled to. Also, UC is not payable if you have savings or other capital assets worth over £16,000. *(It is not clear if savings, etc. left in Ukraine will count towards this limit, but if they are not accessible they are likely to be excluded.)*

As part of the UC claim, you will be interviewed at the Job Centre Plus and your identity confirmed. When you sign on for Universal Credit (UC) you are undertaking a “claimant commitment” which means that the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) expect you to look for work when you are receiving UC.

Once a claim for UC is approved, the JCP should give free help and advice from a Jobcentre Plus Work Coach. They usually lay out some steps that a UC claimant should take to be more work-ready, such as producing a CV or going on training courses. Normally a claimant is expected to prove they have performed a certain number of job applications or work searches per week. Jobcentre Plus has public computers to help you in your job search and it's expected that individuals will look for jobs themselves using job search websites and other methods (see below).

If you are unable to work due to ill-health, either physical or mental, this will be assessed as part of a Work Capability assessment and may mean that you do not have to seek work until your health improves. You may also receive additional money depending on the extent of your ill-health. See [here for further details](#).

The basic UC payment is currently £334 a month for an individual aged over 25. For an adult with 1 child this rises to £624 a month and for 2 children the payment is £869 a month. Any income that is received from earnings may affect the UC payable, but it is possible to earn money from a job and still receive some UC benefit. You can work out how earned income may affect your benefits by running a free benefit calculator such as that provided with Turn2Us.org.uk. Alternatively you can ask [Citizens Advice](#) to check this for you.

Although it takes a minimum of 5 weeks for the first UC payment to be paid, it is usually possible to get an Advanced payment of 1 months' worth of UC on request soon after the person's UC claim is approved. This usually gets paid within hours of approval.

3. Produce a CV

Most potential employers will require the applicant to produce a Curriculum Vitae (CV) which gives details of their education, qualifications, previous employment, skills and job aspirations.

You should try to tailor your CV to the job you are applying to. There are various websites online which provide free CV templates such as [this one from Reed](#) and [another from Total jobs](#). You can ask your JCP Work Coach to help you. It is also hoped that there will be volunteers available through the Redland Welcome Hub who will help people with their CVs.

Many of the job search websites allow you to upload your CV in advance, in readiness for a job application.

There may be some **qualifications** which you have which are accepted as equivalents of UK qualifications. You will need to have this qualification officially recognised if you want to work in a profession that is regulated in the UK. The UK Centre for Professional

Qualifications (UK CPQ) is a free service that can provide you with information to help get your qualifications recognised in the UK. You can look at the [UK CPQ website for more information](#) or phone their enquiry service on 0871 226 2850.

The charity [RefuAid](#) have a scheme which helps refugees with professional qualifications in their own country become retrained or relicensed within the UK to be able to carry on their profession in the UK. They have a loan scheme which can be applied for and is detailed [here](#).

4. Types of employment

In the UK there are 2 main types of employment:

- a. An **Employee** or **Worker** is someone who works for an employer either full-time. Certain basic rights are attached to this type of employment, including a Minimum Wage, basic holiday pay, sick pay and rights against discrimination at work. If you are an employee or worker then tax and insurance is collected by your employer under a scheme called PAYE.

In the UK there is a minimum wage per hour that must be paid to an employee:

From April 2022 those minimums are:

- Age 23 and over - £9.50 per hour
- Age 21 to 22 - £9.18 per hour
- Age 18 to 20 - £6.83 per hour
- Under 18 or Apprentice - £4.18 per hour

In the UK, when you get a job, you should also get a job contract or a job agreement. The terms and conditions of your work will be in your contract or agreement. There are various rights at work that an employee has, including a maximum working hours per week and a safe working environment.

See [Employment Rights](#) for more details

- b. A **Self-employed person** does not have a specific employer, but may obtain work from various contracts. They do not have employment rights but have complete flexibility in deciding how and when they work. Anyone going into self-employment will need to take responsibility for setting themselves up to be registered with the UK government for tax purposes. One way of doing this is to become a sole trader. The process for setting this is described in [this government website](#).

There is no legal minimum wage for self-employed persons.

More details on Employment Status can be found [here](#)

5. Finding a job

These are the main ways to find a job as an employee:

1. Websites and Employment agencies

Places where jobs can be found are generally via the internet using websites such as :

<https://findajob.dwp.gov.uk/> - a government job search facility: you need to register an account using an email address, but this is simple to do. Once you have done this you will be able to search for jobs using various criteria, such as location and skills.

<https://indeedflex.co.uk/flexible-jobs-for-ukrainian-refugees-in-the-uk/> - a job search site where flexible working is key. They also employ Ukrainian-speaking staff to specifically help Ukrainian refugees find a job

<https://onefrontdoor.org.uk/directory-jobs/> - Bristol City Council's directory of jobs on their One Front door portal. They now have dedicated staff to help people on the Homes scheme to find jobs staff. You can self-refer or refer someone else – you just need to mention 'Homes for Ukraine'.

<https://uk.indeed.com> – one of the leading job search organisations

<https://www.cv-library.co.uk/> - a job search facility which also helps with preparing or updating your CV

<https://www.totaljobs.com/> - a general job search website

<https://www.jobsite.co.uk/> - another general job search website

<https://www.caterer.com/> - a job search site for jobs in catering and hospitality – hotels, restaurants, pubs and bars

<https://www.carehome.co.uk/jobs/> - searches for jobs caring for people in care homes.

There are also employment agencies which will take a person's CV and supposedly actively match it up with employment opportunities as they come up. Some of these have offices in Bristol. Two of the larger agencies are:

<https://www.reed.co.uk/> - job agency and search website

<https://www.bluearrow.co.uk/> - Recruitment agency with offices in Bristol

<https://www.acornpeople.com/job-search/> - has a Bristol branch and job search facility. Warehouse and many other jobs available

<https://www.roberthalf.co.uk/looking-for-a-job> - has job search and Bristol office. Accounting, finance and technical jobs on offer

Other specialised agencies include:

<https://www.cucumber-recruitment.co.uk/> Specialists in healthcare recruitment

<http://specrecruitment.co.uk/> - Local Bristol agency specialising in office work

<https://www.risetechnical.co.uk/> - Specialises in technical and engineering jobs. Has a Bristol recruitment office

2. Direct contact with Employers

If a person has a specific skill or qualification then it may be worth contacting an individual employer to see if they have any vacancies.

Some restaurants, bars and shops may have signs in the window advertising jobs that are available. It is worth asking your host or Welcome Hub volunteers if anyone has knowledge of a specific outlet before applying for a job there.

The Redland Welcome Hub produces a list of job opportunities which is available on our website and is updated most weeks. This includes known job vacancies or details of employers who may be considering taking on Ukrainians with specific skills, experiences or qualifications.

3. Social Media

There are a number of websites, Facebook groups and other social media which can be used to look for jobs. It is important to understand that many of these are not subject to any central scrutiny or control, so any job opportunities that are seen on these sites should be treated with a little caution as they may not always be as genuine as they seem. Having said that, they can be a useful addition to the job-seeking armoury.

Examples of such sites include:

[Bristol & Somerset for Ukrainian Refugees Facebook group](#): this has lots of posts from Ukrainians and hosts seeking to be matched up. It also has some posts on job opportunities. You need to sign up to the group to see posts

[Jobs for Ukraine – Somerset Facebook group](#): this is specific about jobs but currently does not cover the city of Bristol. You need to sign up to the group to see posts

[Next door Redland](#): there are a number of these “Next Door” sites around different areas of Bristol. They have many purposes, including a place for you ask about jobs on offer. You need to sign up to the website giving your contact details in order to see posts

[Shop Local Gloucester Road](#) Facebook page. On this site you can see jobs on offer from the local shops

[LinkedIn](#) is another useful site where members (both workers and employers) create profiles and connect with each other in an online social network. LinkedIn can be used to post information about yourself which prospective employers can see and then contact you. You can also search for jobs on LinkedIn.

4. Council Employment help & Job Fairs

Bristol City Council have a team dedicated to helping people looking for employment. This is fronted through a portal website called One Front Door. They now have dedicated staff to

help people on the Homes scheme to find jobs staff. You can self-refer or refer someone else – you just need to mention 'Homes for Ukraine'.

<https://onefrontdoor.org.uk/individuals/>

This website has the following

- a contact form for Ukrainians to fill in. You will be rung back by a job coach who can help you find employment. Translators are available for this service.
- a jobs board where local job opportunities are advertised
- details of jobs fairs being held in Bristol.

Job Fairs are a good way to meet prospective employers. They are often arranged by the local Council in conjunction with the DWP. Often employers for many locally-based companies are present and available to talk to you about jobs they have available, in all different types of work.

At a Job Fair you can speak with potential employers face-to-face. You can collect information on employers, register your interest in any jobs advertised, ask the employers questions or even have a mini interview on the day. Employers are often ready to fill their vacancies so it helps if you have your CV available to give to them.

Usually Job Fairs do not require you to register - you can just turn up on the day. They are usually open to all to attend. If you want more information your JCP Work Coach will usually know about an upcoming Job Fair.

In Bristol, the City Council have a website called One Front Door, which is staffed by people who offer free advice and support to people looking for work. Bristol City Council's directory of jobs is on their One Front door portal.

Upcoming Job Fairs are listed at:

<https://onefrontdoor.org.uk/upcoming-events/>

5. Job Interviews

After submitting your application, you might be invited to an interview. Do not worry if you do not hear back from the employer – applying for jobs is competitive. It is normal to apply for many jobs at once. Interviews can vary – you might be asked a series of questions or asked to complete a trial shift. Read the interview instructions well – you may be asked to prepare something in advance. Try to arrive early to the interview and check what the dress code is. You can ask your JCP Work Coach to help you prepare.

6. Working for yourself

If you want to work as self-employed then the main goal will be finding task that need to be done under contract. This could be one main activity specific organisation or person or may be a number of tasks for different organisations or people.

It is important to keep good records of the work that has been done, and how much was paid as this will need to be reported to the tax authorities at the end of the financial year.

There is free help available if you want to set yourself up in self-employment. In Bristol the organisation ACH has a Migrant Business Support (MBS) project which helps refugees set up their own business. Go to ach.org.uk/migrant-business-support

There is also a UK-wide organisation called Opora which is aimed specifically at Ukrainian refugees who want to set up a business in the UK. There are grants available which you can apply for. Click on opora.uk/business-support-for-ukrainian-entrepreneurs

7. Other resources available

Redland Welcome Hub ran a Job Seeking Event in June 2022. At this event we run through the basic requirements for working in the UK, as detailed in this Guide. We also provide hints and tips for writing your CV and for how to prepare for a job interview.

Much of this information is available as a hand-out pack. We can provide the document to you by email in either English or Ukrainian. Please email welcomehub@redland.church if you would like to be sent an information pack.

We can also provide one-to-one support for individuals who want help in writing CVs, job searching or any other activity related to looking for work. This can be provided via the Kav'yarnya drop in sessions on Wednesday mornings at Redland Halls or we can fix up appointments with one of our partner organisations who is offering free help to Ukrainian refugees looking for jobs.

Two local organisations in Bristol who offer employment support are:

a. **Groundwork** – they can offer one-to-one sessions with an employment adviser and also group sessions where you can meet experts in their field of work and learn how to get ready for employment in the UK.

Email impactbristol@groundwork.org.uk

Ring Muna – 07702532767 or Asia on 07736132450

b. **ACH** – they can offer employment support such as CV writing, interview preparation, etc. They have visited Redland Kav'yarnya to provide support to individuals.

Contact Shirley.pitman@ach.org.uk