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# Ukraine Psychological Wellbeing Advice Pack – Guidance for Services

April 2022



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## **PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING ADVICE PACK FOR** **SUPPORTING UKRAINIAN FAMILIES, HOST FAMILIES, & PROFESSIONALS**

The individual/s arriving from Ukraine will have their own unique emotional needs. They are arriving to a country and culture that they may be very unfamiliar with, and have life experiences or backgrounds that are very different to ours.

Due to the differing nature of experiences of each Ukrainian family it is helpful to consider the complexity and uniqueness of these families' experiences, so that appropriate supports help reduce the effects of adversity on the family, and also reinforce the family's own positive potential to address their own needs.

Recognising that different family members may have radically different experiences of the ordeal and different journeys to Scotland is also important. This lack of shared experience is something that could cause misunderstanding. This guide is to help you think about how to support families and individuals from Ukraine, host families, and staff working in services.

### **General Key Principles:**

To support the needs of refugees arriving in Scotland, **three** key groups of people will need to be carefully thought of when considering Psychological Wellbeing:

- refugees, both adults and children;
- host families/people, both adults and children, and;
- interpreters, professionals and volunteers providing support to refugees

Evidence tells us that people are more likely to be able to psychologically cope with, and recover from, trauma, if they:

- feel safe and are in calm supportive environments;
- have access to practical social, physical, and emotional support, and;
- feel able to help themselves, as individuals and communities.

Different kinds of crises affect people in different ways, and there's a wide range of responses that people can have. Most often people respond with resilience and in ways that are designed to protect themselves and loved ones. Some people may also want to manage difficult things on their own, or find help from others that they seek out themselves. However, if someone is distressed, the first line approach is to use **Psychological First Aid** and also to use a **Trauma Informed Framework**.



## Psychological First Aid (PFA)

PFA is a way of helping people to feel calm and cope in difficult situations. PFA involves caring about the person, paying attention to their needs, using active listening, and giving practical advice. PFA is not professional therapy or encouraging conversations about the cause of distress. Offering formal therapy and structured interventions can actually cause unintended psychological harms if offered too soon after a traumatic situation. It can also be unhelpful to 'pathologise' normal distress.

PFA is a way of helping people cope with distress, and it is something anyone can do. The focus is to help people get their basic needs met, such as access to safety, food, and shelter, and providing them with social support and information. This social support is best provided by people that they know, and/or have similar experiences to them. It is also important to note that not everyone who is in distress may need or want PFA. The seven principles of Psychological First Aid are (NES, 2021):

- help people care for their immediate needs;
- protect them from further risk of threats or harm;
- comfort and console;
- support people with practical tasks;
- provide information;
- help them connect to their own social supports;
- educate people about normal emotional reactions and responses.



The key principles that everyone can apply when thinking about PFA are:

- **LOOK** for emotional reactions and see if someone wants or needs help;
- **LISTEN** by paying attention, accepting the person's feelings, ask about their needs, and help them find solutions;
- **LINK** them into helpful information, help them connect with loved ones and their own social supports, and support them to find ways to solve practical problems.



It should be expected that many people will continue to experience psychological difficulties, including nightmares, feelings of anxiety, panic and low mood, for some time after they have arrived in Scotland. The events in Ukraine are ongoing and therefore the trauma and distress will be ongoing for people who have had to flee from Ukraine.

## Trauma Informed Framework

Trauma that can cause distress, or more complex reactions, refers to a wide range of traumatic events or series of events that are experienced as being emotionally or physically harmful or life-threatening. Whether an event is traumatic depends not only on individual experience of the event, but also how it negatively impacts on emotional, social, spiritual and physical wellbeing. We are all affected by traumatic events in different ways.

Psychological trauma can be understood in terms of the 3 **E**'s:

- the **E**vent
- how it is **E**xperienced
- and its **E**ffect

Using a 'Trauma Informed' approach to care can be very helpful ([NES Trauma Informed - Home \(transformingpsychologicaltrauma.scot\)](https://www.nes.gov.scot/trauma-informed)). This means being able to recognise when someone may be affected by trauma, and adjusting how we take this into account. This way of responding supports recovery, does no harm, and recognises and supports people's natural resilience.

Being 'Trauma Informed' is underpinned by the 5 R's:

1. **R**ealising the experience of trauma is common after life threatening events
2. **R**ecognising the different ways that trauma can affect people
3. **R**esponding by taking account of the ways that people can be affected by trauma to support their recovery
4. Opportunities to **R**esist re-traumatisation and offer a greater sense of choice and control, empowerment, collaboration and safety
5. Recognising the central importance of **R**elationship and social connection.

You can find out more about Psychological First Aid via Turas Learn<sup>1</sup> and about how to be trauma informed [Trauma skilled | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](https://www.nhs.uk/trauma-skilled-turas-learn)

In the first few days after the traumatic event:

- It is normal for people to experience some distress after exposure to a crisis and conflict. This may include difficulties sleeping, distressing thoughts and memories popping to mind, nightmares, irritability, feelings of helplessness, reliving aspects of what has happened, and thinking that you should have done more to help.

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<sup>1</sup> \*Registration with Turas Learn is necessary, but **anyone with an email address can register**. You can register for an account [with Turas here](https://www.nhs.uk/trauma-skilled-turas-learn).



- Bereavement and separation from loved ones will also be something that many adults and children will be processing. They may have had little opportunity to grieve and participate in family mourning rituals.
- Social support from family, friends and people that are known and trusted is important.
- Although talking about what happened can be helpful, no-one should be forced to talk about their experiences. For some, it is important to have quiet time to think things through but for others the opportunity to organise what has happened into a coherent story reduces feelings of helplessness.
- Trying to get back to the routine things in life can be helpful, for example having times for getting up, going to bed and eating can give a sense of normality to life.
- Spiritual beliefs can be strengthened and tested by disasters. For some people faith groups can be a source of support.
- It is helpful to allow people to make their own decisions about as many things as possible.
- For parents and child carers providing open, honest and direct information to children about what is known and explanations of their own and other adult reactions they may have seen can be helpful in the following weeks and months.

When supporting people arriving from Ukraine, the role of community support is of paramount importance. Appropriate support from the extended family and community strengthens these families and reduces the negative effects (British Psychological Society, [Guidelines for Psychologists Working With Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the UK - Extended \(Update Nov 2018\).pdf \(bps.org.uk\)](#)).

The role of spirituality and religious affiliation is also of great importance for some especially during periods of dislocation and relocation. Due to the differing nature of experiences of each Ukrainian family, it is also helpful to consider the complexity and uniqueness of these families' experiences, so that appropriate supports are aimed at not only minimising the destructive effects of adversity on the family, but also reinforcing the family's own positive potential to address their own needs. This includes recognising that different family members may have radically different experiences of the ordeal and different journeys to the UK. This lack of shared experience is something that could cause misunderstanding if not recognised.

Many people find that their initial difficulties settle down, and they are able to return to a more normal life within a few weeks. The World Health Organisation have developed helpful resources for individuals affected by stress and adversity, including those fleeing war. These provide information and evidence based practical skills to help with coping. These are available in [English](#), [Ukrainian](#) and [Russian](#).

For some people, the problems persist or get more intense:

- Sometimes there is a delay in the response to the trauma.
- People can begin to experience other difficulties such as avoiding people or places or developing panic attacks or anxiety when faced with reminders of what happened (high buildings, fire sirens, etc.)
- It is important to check regularly to see how people are coping to see if more help is required.



Some people can have more complex reactions to trauma, however care should be taken to monitor for severe psychological disorder, whether pre-existing or caused by the current crisis. Some examples of severe reactions are feeling suicidal, not eating or drinking, or having ongoing flashbacks. Those with prolonged and more complex difficulties, especially where there are elements of risk such as feeling suicidal, should be supported by clinical services where appropriate.

A list of support services is provided in Appendix 1. A guidance pack has also been provided for host families (see Appendix 2) and also for those arriving from Ukraine (see Appendix 3). It is important that these guides get to those that need them so that they can understand psychological and emotional reactions and what can help. Resources can also be found in Appendix 4.

## How to Take Care of Yourself

It is important we take care of ourselves too, whilst providing support to others who have experienced trauma. As service providers, and individuals, we can take steps to promote our own wellbeing and that of others, including those who are providing a range of supports and services to refugees. Here is some helpful information about [self care and looking after yourself in a crisis](#). Individuals can develop their own wellbeing plan using this [Wellbeing Planning Tool on Turas](#).

Those responsible for providing services should consider the wellbeing needs of staff and volunteers, including interpreters, giving consideration to availability of support that may include de-briefing and/or reflective practice supervision, as appropriate to role.

Guidance is available for managers and supervisors on how to upskill staff to improve their knowledge of psychological first aid principles and confidence in applying these in practice. This is called [Psychological first aid in action : supporting implementation of psychological first aid in local services, and can be found here on Turas](#).



## Appendix 1 SUPPORT SERVICES

### **SCOTTISH REFUGEE COUNCIL**

The **Scottish Refugee Council's** helpline service provides information and initial advice on housing, education, health, learning English and building social connections in Scotland. They can also help people access legal advice on immigration issues. An interpreter can be requested. The helpline advisers carry out initial diagnostic assessments, identify needs and advice, refer and signpost people to right services. They are here to listen, provide a safe space for families and help people navigate the challenging circumstances they may be experiencing.

**Helpline number: 0808 196 7274** and information on the helpline is here: <https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/telephone-advice-line/> Scottish Refugee Council can also identify the support needed by hosts and provide initial and essential information to them.

### **BARNARDO'S**

[Help for anyone fleeing the Ukrainian conflict | Barnardo's \(barnardos.org.uk\)](https://www.barnardos.org.uk/help-for-anyone-fleeing-the-ukrainian-conflict)

Barnardo's have set up the **Ukrainian Support Helpline** to provide a holistic support service. The Helpline is available to anyone fleeing the conflict in Ukraine. You can get in touch if you need support with:

- Therapy with a qualified psychotherapist – delivered via the phone or online, with access to interpreters.
- Advice on a range of issues e.g., housing, accessing key health services, education, employment and more via trained helpline support workers
- Practical support - access to digital devices to ensure families stay connected to loved ones during this worrying time, as well as stimulating toys for children, vital baby items and more.

All services include access to interpreters in Ukrainian and Russian. **The Barnardo's Helpline is open:** Monday – Friday 10.00am - 8.00pm and Saturday 10.00am - 3.00pm

### **BRITISH RED CROSS**

The **British Red Cross** [Help for Ukrainian nationals in the UK \(redcross.org.uk\)](https://www.redcross.org.uk/help-for-ukrainian-nationals-in-the-uk) supports people from Ukraine who are in the UK. For any more information about British Red Cross, or for emotional support please call the free British Red Cross support line: **0808 196 3651** (open between 10am - 6pm daily).

### **PARENTLINE**

Parentline [Support for asylum seeking and refugee families | Children 1st](https://www.parentline.org.uk/support-for-asylum-seeking-and-refugee-families) can provide advice for parents. If you live in Scotland call **08000 28 22 33** browse the website for advice and support, or start a web chat. **They are open seven days a week** Mon-Fri, 9am to 9pm and Sat-Sun, 9am to noon.

If people are at risk of harm they can see the local GP, calling NHS 24 on **111**, the Samaritans on **116 123**, or Breathing Space on **83 85 87**.



## Appendix 2

### ADVICE PACK GIVEN TO HOST FAMILIES

Thank you for the offer to host a Ukrainian family/person in your home. The individual/s you are welcoming will have their own unique emotional needs. They are arriving to a country and culture that they may be very unfamiliar with, and have life experiences or backgrounds that are very different to yours.

Due to the differing nature of experiences of each Ukrainian family it is helpful to consider the complexity and uniqueness of these families' experiences, so that appropriate supports help reduce the effects of adversity on the family, and also reinforce the family's own positive potential to address their own needs.

Recognising that different family members may have radically different experiences of the ordeal and different journeys to Scotland is also important. This lack of shared experience is something that could cause misunderstanding

This guide is to help you know how to manage any emotional responses of the Ukrainian people staying with you, how to look after them, and also how to look after yourself and your own family.

#### General Principles

To support the needs of Ukrainian families arriving in Scotland evidence tells us that people are more likely to be able to psychologically cope with and recover from traumatic life events if they:

- feel safe and are in calm supportive environments
- have access to practical social, physical, and emotional support; and
- feel able to help themselves, as individuals and communities.

The World Health Organisation (2011) provides the following principles to hold in mind when offering support to refugees.

#### ***Ensure Safety***

- Avoid putting people at further risk of harm as a result of your actions
- Make sure, to the best of your ability, that the adults and children you help are safe and protect them from physical or psychological harm.

#### ***Promote Dignity***

- Treat people with respect and according to their cultural and social norms.

#### ***Uphold Rights***

- Make sure people can access help fairly and without discrimination.
- Help people to claim their rights and access available support.
- Act only in the best interest of any person you encounter.





As a host you are providing psychological safety by helping people get their basic needs met such as access to safety, food, and shelter and providing them with basic social support and information. However, you may find that those you are hosting are distressed, upset and not coping well.

Different kinds of crises affect people in different ways, and there is a wide range of emotional responses that people can have. Most often people respond with resilience and in ways that are designed to protect themselves and loved ones. Some people may also want to manage difficult things on their own or find help from others that they already know or trust. Some people may show distress while others may show anger or withdraw. Each individual response will be different.

Every person has strengths and abilities to help them cope with life challenges. However, some people are particularly vulnerable in a crisis situation and may need extra help. This includes people who may be at risk or need additional support because of their age (children, elderly), because they have a mental or physical disability, or because they have been the victims of violence or discrimination.

## HOSTING UKRAINIAN PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

### KEY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

#### What will people need when they first arrive?

- They will need to feel that they are **safe**, to know what to expect and for things to feel **predictable**.
- They will want help to know how to **access the things they immediately need** for themselves and their family.
- They will need a **calm** environment and to be shown understanding.

#### What can I do to help with this?

- Provide secure safe and comfortable accommodation.
- Be welcoming, calm, patient and kind.
- Respect their privacy and don't try and make them accept your help.
- Don't talk too much and allow for space for silence, where needed.
- Do not press people for information or pressure people to talk about what they have been through.
- Learn how to properly pronounce people's names if you can.
- Try to reduce stress by being thoughtful about people's practical needs.
- Offer help, where this is wanted and accept that not all people will want help.
- Don't feel you need to rescue the person – try to enable people to find their own solutions where possible.
- Provide a private and quiet space.
- Let people set their own routines and do not expect them to fit in with yours.
- Know that distress in this situation is a normal reaction. In adults, distress might come across as anger, panic, sadness, crying and withdrawal.
- Young children under 2 years old might fuss more, sleep less and be harder to soothe.



- Older children and young people might be fearful, angry, sad, find it hard to sleep or complain of physical problems.
- There is advice about infant mental health on Wellbeing for [Wellbeing for wee ones | Parent Club](#)
- There is advice for parents and carers on supporting older children's mental wellbeing at [Supporting your teen's mental health | Parent Club](#) and advice and information about emotional wellbeing for young people at [Aye Feel | Young Scot](#)
- Try not to judge people for their reactions and emotions. Instead try to be alongside people who are distressed – offering kindness and support but without trying to rescue them.
- Understand that those you are hosting may not feel able at this time to feel thankful or to express gratitude. Try to understand and accept this.
- Do not feel you have to solve everything for the people you are hosting but do know how to direct people to local supports and community groups.
- Provide spaces where the people you are hosting can meet together to talk over and solve the problems they are facing.
- Provide spaces and toys for children to play with. Some very helpful ideas for supporting children's play can be found here: [Helping your child through play | Parent Club](#) and <https://www.wvi.org/publications/manualtoolkit/child-friendly-spaces-home-activity-cards-english>
- Provide spaces and opportunities for young people to connect with each other.
- Support children and teenagers to connect with friends and family where possible.
- Do not ask children to interpret for adults.
- Help people to orientate to the local area, to churches, mosques, and synagogues, libraries, sports centres and to green spaces.
- Do not have the news about Ukraine on in the shared spaces in the house or in front of the those you are hosting, unless the Ukrainian family wish to watch this.

### **Will they need to discuss what has happened after their arrival?**

- Usually people recover best following crises by coming together with people from their own communities and supporting each other.
- When supporting Ukrainian families, **the role of their own community support is of great importance.**
- Helping them link other and to connect with family to talk through and solve their difficulties, recognise their strengths and to offer practical and emotional support to each other is the best way to help.
- Appropriate support from their extended family and community strengthens and reduces the negative effects (British Psychological Society, [Guidelines for Psychologists Working With Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the UK - Extended \(Update Nov 2018\).pdf \(bps.org.uk\)](#)).
- Some people may wish to talk with their host about what they have been through. Providing a listening ear if you can at these times can be helpful without pressing for details.



- The role of spirituality and religious affiliation is also important for some especially during the periods of change and relocation. This should be respected.

### **Do people who are distressed need mental health services?**

- Distress in these circumstances is normal and to be expected. Most people will not need professional support for their mental health but will get through this time with the help of their family, their friends their community and by drawing on their own established coping strategies.
- If they do not have ready access to support from friends, family or their community, then having someone else to talk to who is able to be supportive can help.
- If you feel able as a host to provide a listening ear this can be helpful – so long as you feel able to listen actively without feeling overwhelmed.
- A small number of people will benefit from being supported by someone outside their family – providing a private and quiet space with an interpreter can help in these situations.
- A small number of people might benefit from crisis mental health input. People may need more specialist help if they:
  - have pre-existing mental health conditions
  - are so upset they cannot care for themselves or their children
  - feel like they want to hurt themselves or hurt others
  - are not eating or attending to self-care
  - are expressing suicidal ideas or plans

### **Who can I contact for advice and guidance if I am concerned about the psychological or mental health needs of a child, an adult or a family?**

- Once Ukrainian individuals are allocated to a GP any concerns about their health can be supported by the GP.
- Concerns about children under 5 can be discussed with the health visiting team and relevant health visitors if they are allocated.
- Out of hours advice and guidance can be accessed via NHS 24 Telephone 111. Staff there have been trained to support you as a host or they can support those you are hosting and provide advice.

### **How might people respond in the first few days after traumatic events?**

- It is normal to experience some distress after exposure to a crisis and conflict. This may include difficulties in sleeping, distressing thoughts and memories popping to mind, nightmares, irritability, reliving aspects of what has happened, and thinking that you should have done more to help.
- Bereavement and separation from loved ones, friends, or pets will also be something that many adults and children may have experienced. They may have had little opportunity to grieve and participate in family mourning rituals.
- Some people may be wanting to talk and others may withdraw. Although talking about what happened can be helpful, no-one should be forced to talk about their experiences. For some, it is important to have quiet time to think



things through but for others the opportunity to organise what has happened into a story reduces feelings of helplessness.

- Things can feel very out of control so trying to get back to the routine things in life can be helpful, for example having times for getting up, going to bed and eating can give a sense of normality to life.
- Spiritual beliefs can be strengthened and tested by disasters. For some people faith groups can be a source of support.
- Young babies will also be impacted by crisis and parents are likely to be concerned about their wellbeing and recovery. Advice about mental health and wellbeing for babies can be found at [Wellbeing for wee ones | Parent Club](#).
- Pregnant women are also likely to be concerned about their own health and that of their baby and will benefit from support from local maternity services, as well as community groups. [Looking after your mental health during pregnancy | Parent Club](#)
- It is helpful to allow people to make their own decisions about as many things as possible.
- For parents and child carers providing open, honest and direct information to children about what is known and explanations of their own and other adult reactions they may have seen can be helpful in the following weeks and months.

Many people find that their initial difficulties settle down and they are able to return to a more normal life within a few weeks. The World Health Organisation have developed helpful resources for individuals affected by stress and adversity, including those fleeing war. These provide information and evidence based practical skills to help with coping. These are available in [English](#), [Ukrainian](#) and [Russian](#).

### How you can help those you are hosting

The general approach to helping anyone who is distressed, is to use something called **Psychological First Aid (PFA)**. It is a way of helping people to feel calm and cope in difficult situations. PFA involves caring about the person, paying attention to their needs, using active listening and giving practical advice.

PFA is not professional therapy or encouraging conversations about the cause of distress. Offering formal therapy can actually cause psychological harm if offered too soon during an ongoing traumatic situation. PFA is a way of helping people cope with distress and it is something anyone can do. It is also important to note that not everyone who is in distress may need or want PFA. You should not also feel that you have to be the person to provide psychological support. If you want to help the person/people you are hosting cope better the following can be helpful:

- be calm;
- paying attention to their needs and our own;
- listen to them without needing to offer advice;
- show empathy and kindness;
- and give practical advice and support, where needed.

The seven principles of Psychological First Aid you can use to help yourself and the people you are hosting are (NHS Education for Scotland, 2021):

- help people care for their immediate needs
- protect them from further risk of threats or harm
- comfort and console them
- support people with practical tasks
- provide information so they know where to get help
- help them connect to their own social supports
- educate people about normal emotional reactions and responses



If you are interested you can find out more about Psychological First Aid via Turas Learn<sup>2</sup>.

Trauma that can cause distress, or more complex reactions, refers to a wide range of traumatic events or series of events that are experienced as being emotionally or physically harmful or life threatening. Whether an event is traumatic depends not only on individual experience of the event, but also how it impacts on emotional, social, spiritual and physical wellbeing. We are all affected by traumatic events in different ways.

Using a 'Trauma Informed' approach can also be very helpful ([NES Trauma Informed - Home \(transformingpsychologicaltrauma.scot\)](https://www.nes.gov.uk/trauma-informed-home)). This means being able to recognise when someone may be affected by trauma (including yourself), and adjusting how we take this into account. This way of responding supports recovery, does no harm, and recognises and supports people's natural resilience.

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<sup>2</sup> \*Registration with Turas Learn is necessary, but **anyone with an email address can register**. You can register for an account [with Turas here](#).

In a few people, the problems persist or get more intense:

- Sometimes there is a delay in the response to the traumatic experiences people have had.
- People can begin to experience other difficulties such as avoiding people or places or develop anxiety when faced with reminders of what happened (high buildings, fire sirens, etc.)

Ukrainian families/people staying with you will still be experiencing ongoing trauma as the war is not over so it is expected they will still show signs of distress. Some people may be experiencing complex post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or other mental health disorders, and for these people access to timely specialist help is recommended. A person with more severe reactions can require specialist help. Some examples of complex reactions are feeling suicidal, not eating or drinking, or harming themselves.

Please encourage those you are hosting to get help if they are feeling they are at risk of harm from the local GP, calling NHS 24 on **111**, the Samaritans on **116 123**, or Breathing Space on **83 85 87**.

### **Taking care of yourself and your family**

Hosting displaced Ukrainian's is an important humanitarian role. However, as well as thinking about the needs of the person(s) you are hosting it will also be important to pay extra attention to your own health and wellbeing – for the benefit of all concerned. As a host you or your family may feel affected by the distress the person(s) you are hosting are feeling or the stories they tell about what they have been through.

You may start to feel responsible for the safety or care of the people you are hosting and want to help them to make contact with loved ones. You may feel a tension between giving time to your role as host and the usual demands of family life. You may feel disappointed or sad that they are not thankful or happy to be here.

You may also find it hard to understand their culture or ways of coping. All of these responses are normal, expected and understandable. For this reason it is important that you recognise any impacts of the role on you and your family, take time to attend to your own wellbeing and manage your own stress.

The following ideas may be helpful in managing your own emotions:

- Try to keep your usual routines as far as possible.
- Try to schedule and take time to eat, rest and relax.
- Think about what has helped you and your family cope during challenging times in the past and try to do these things.
- Access support for yourself by talking to friends, loved ones or other people you trust.
- Recognise your own reactions and frustrations and remind yourself that your role as host does not mean you need to solve all of the problems.



- Enable the people you are hosting to access other sources of support.
- Connect with other hosts to see how they are doing.
- Access additional support for yourself if you need this.
- Try not to watch or listen to too much news about Ukraine, especially in front of the people you are hosting.
- Try and keep up your own normal family activities.

### **Holding your own children in mind when hosting:**

If you have your own children in the house these things can be helpful to think about:

- Keeping all the things that are usually helpful and important to your children as a priority.
- Your children's routine should continue unchanged as much as possible including things such as bedtime routines, meals, education, chance to see loved family and to spend time having fun with friends.
- Welcoming new people into your home will be both exciting but may also be challenging for your children.
- There will be chance to get to know and play with new people alongside the challenge of sharing space, toys and technology or devices.
- Find good times and ways to listen to your children and explore how they are they are making sense of the changes.
- [Parent club Scotland](#) have some great resources and ideas of how to listen and talk to children and young people.
- Communicate with your children's school, college, early learning or childcare provider so that they know you are hosting Ukrainian people/families, just in case your child would benefit from extra support.
- Children and teenagers will learn from your behaviour and copy what you do so think about taking breaks from social media.
- Resources for supporting healthy social media and screen time use can be found here: [Home - Mind Yer Time](#)
- Explain what is happening and why simply and calmly to your children.
- Listen to any concerns your children might have about sharing their home with others.
- Ensure children have their own space and privacy.
- Do not expect children to care for the people/family you are hosting.
- Protect children as far as possible from seeing or hearing high distress.
- Try to ensure that traumatic events are not discussed in front of children.
- Where possible it is better to keep the news off in front of your children and take time to discuss with your child about how they are feeling about things they may be hearing.
- Helpful advice about how to manage your exposure to news, events and social media can be found here: <https://pscentre.org/?resource=how-to-manage-your-exposure-to-news-events-and-social-media>.



## How to get help for those you are hosting

### **SCOTTISH REFUGEE COUNCIL**

The Scottish Refugee Council's helpline service provides information and initial advice on housing, education, health, learning English and building social connections in Scotland for refugees. They can also help people access legal advice on immigration issues. An interpreter can be requested. The helpline advisers carry out initial diagnostic assessments, identify needs and advice, refer and signpost people to right services. They are there to listen, provide a safe space for families and help people navigate the challenging circumstances they may be experiencing.

**Helpline number: 0808 196 7274** and information on the helpline is here: <https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/telephone-advice-line/>  
**Scottish Refugee Council can also identify the support needed by hosts and provide initial and essential information to you as needed.**

### **BARNARDO'S**

Refugees can get help from a telephone helpline at Barnardo's [Help for anyone fleeing the Ukrainian conflict | Barnardo's \(barnardos.org.uk\)](#) Barnardo's have set up the **Ukrainian Support Helpline** to provide a holistic support service. The Helpline is available to anyone fleeing the conflict in Ukraine. All services include access to interpreters in Ukrainian and Russian. **The Barnardo's Helpline is open: Monday – Friday 10.00am - 8.00pm and Saturday 10.00am - 3.00pm.** People can get in touch if they need support with:

- Therapy with a qualified psychotherapist – delivered via the phone or online, with access to interpreters
- Advice on a range of issues e.g, housing, accessing key health services, education, employment and more via our trained helpline support workers
- Practical support - access to digital devices to ensure families stay connected to loved ones during this worrying time, as well as stimulating toys for children, vital baby items and more

### **BRITISH RED CROSS**

The British Red Cross [Help for Ukrainian nationals in the UK \(redcross.org.uk\)](#) supports people from Ukraine who are in the UK. For any more information about British Red Cross, or for emotional support please call the free British Red Cross support line: **0808 196 3651** (open between 10am - 6pm daily).

### **PARENTLINE**

Parentline [Support for asylum seeking and refugee families | Children 1st](#) can provide advice for parents. If you live in Scotland call **08000 28 22 33** free, browse our website for advice and support, or start a web chat. **They are open seven days a week** Mon-Fri, 9am to 9pm and Sat-Sun, 9am to noon

Your Local Authority contacts, **NHS telephone 111** or your local General Practice (GP) can also provide help and support.





## Accessing support for your own mental health and wellbeing

A wide range of advice on maintaining positive mental wellbeing can be found through the [Clear Your Head](#) and [NHS Inform](#) websites.

If, in your role as a host you are feeling overwhelmed, having trouble sleeping, using alcohol more than usual or just feel it would help to talk to someone you can contact.

- The NHS 24 Mental Health Hub: This is available to provide urgent care advice and mental health support day or night - call 111
- [Breathing Space](#): This is Scotland's national mental health phone line, is free, confidential, available out of hours and offers advice around wellbeing and coping with low mood, depression and anxiety. They are open from Monday to Thursday 6pm to 2am and weekends from 6pm on Friday to 6am on Monday – call 0800 83 85 87.
- [The Samaritans](#): This organisation offers support to anyone in emotional distress or at risk of suicide. They are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Call 116 123 to speak to someone who can help.



## Appendix 3

### ADVICE PACK GIVEN TO UKRAINIAN ARRIVALS

Welcome to Scotland. This guide is here to help provide you with some simple advice and resources about psychological wellbeing and where to seek help if you need it.

Different kinds of crises affect people in different ways. There's a wide range of responses or feelings that you, your family, or friends may feel after fleeing from a dangerous situation. You may find that you have coped well, and in ways that are designed to protect yourself and your loved ones. You may also want to manage difficult things on your own or you may want to find help from others that you know and trust. You may also feel you might need help from others and this guide is to help you care for yourself and your loved ones and find the support you need.

When living with your host family it is important you feel safe and cared for. The World Health Organisation (2011) provides the following principles which have been shared with host families:

#### ***Ensure Safety***

- Avoid putting people at further risk of harm as a result of your actions
- Make sure, to the best of your ability, that the adults and children you help are safe and protect them from physical or psychological harm.

#### ***Promote Dignity***

- Treat people with respect and according to their cultural and social norms.

#### ***Uphold Rights***

- Make sure people can access help fairly and without discrimination.
- Help people to claim their rights and access available support.
- Act only in the best interest of any person you encounter.

When living with a host family you should feel safe, protected from harms, and treated with respect. Feeling safe and protected can help you feel more psychologically safe and able to cope with the difficult situation you are in.

### How Trauma Can Affect you

Trauma that can cause distress, or more complex emotional reactions, refers to a wide range of upsetting events or series of events that are experienced as being emotionally or physically harmful or life threatening. Whether an event is traumatic depends not only on individual experience of the event, but also how it impacts on emotional, social, spiritual and physical wellbeing. The events in Ukraine are also still ongoing so this is a traumatic event that is not over. You may therefore be affected by this traumatic events in different ways.

### **In the first few days after traumatic events:**

- It is normal to experience distress after exposure to a crisis and conflict. This may include difficulties in sleeping, distressing thoughts and memories popping to mind, nightmares, feeling angry, reliving aspects of what has happened and thinking that you should have done more to help.
- Bereavement and separation from loved ones or pets will also be something that you or your family may have experienced. You may have had little opportunity to grieve and participate in family mourning rituals.
- Social support from family, friends and people that are known and trusted is important and you should seek this out where possible.
- Although talking about what happened can be helpful, being forced to talk about your experiences can be unhelpful.
- For some, it is important to have quiet time to think things through but for others the opportunity to organise what has happened into a story reduces upsetting feelings.
- Trying to get back to the routine things in life can be helpful, for example having times for getting up, going to bed and eating can give a sense of some normality to life.
- Spiritual beliefs can be strengthened and tested by disasters. For some people faith groups can be a source of support.
- It is helpful to make your own decisions about as many things as possible so you feel more in control of what is happening.
- Providing open, honest and direct information to your children about what is known and explanations of their own and other adult reactions they may have seen can be helpful.

Understanding how trauma affects us can help us to recover.

- The experience of trauma is common after life threatening events
- Trauma can affect people differently and people can react differently
- People are affected by trauma in an individual way
- You will cope better if you have a sense of choice, control, and safety
- Relationships and social connections are really important

You may find that any upsetting feelings settle down and you are able to return to a more normal life within a few weeks. The World Health Organisation have developed helpful resources for individuals affected by stress and adversity, including those fleeing war. These provide information and evidence based practical skills to help with coping. These are available in [English](#), [Ukrainian](#) and [Russian](#).

In a few people, the problems can get more intense:

- Sometimes there is a delay in the response to the trauma.
- People can begin to experience other difficulties such as avoiding people or places or developing panic attacks or anxiety when faced with reminders of what happened (high buildings, fire sirens, etc.)



- It is important to check how you are coping to see if more help is required.

Information about post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and how trauma can affect you can be found here [Free Ukrainian, Polish, And Russian Translations Of Trauma And PTSD Psychoeducational Resources - Psychology Tools](#)

Some people can have more complex reactions to traumatic situations and distress. If you, or a family member, are experiencing more complex reactions this can require help from someone with specialist skills. Some examples of complex reactions are feeling suicidal, not eating or drinking, and feelings that you want to harm yourself. You should seek help from a professional if you are feeling this way.

The National Health Service (NHS) in Scotland can provide help if you call free on **111** or your local General Practice (GP) can also provide support if you have psychological wellbeing or mental health needs.

You can also get help from the **Samaritans** 24 hours a day for support and help. You can call them free on **116 123** and find out more details here [If you're having a difficult time | Samaritans](#)

**Breathing Space** is also a free service in Scotland and you can call them on 0800 83 85 87. Details can also be found here: [Breathing Space is a free confidential service for people in Scotland. Open up when you're feeling down - phone 0800 83 85 87](#)

## SUPPORTING YOUR CHILDREN

### **Advice about Children and Families**

During this crisis, your children and you as their parents/carers may have experienced a wide range of very challenging events. You may have witnessed violence, disruption, leaving a loved and familiar home and country, separation from friends and family.

Children's experience of the crisis may differ from that of their families especially if family members left Ukraine at different times or by different routes. Children may be most upset by very different things to those which distress adults. They may appear fine at times and then very fragile or angry at other times. This is a normal reaction to the events they have experienced.

### **Regular predictable routines**

Children will benefit from routines that are as normal as possible such as maintaining regular mealtimes with familiar food, chances to play with and chat to familiar friends and adults, keeping regular bedtimes and getting up routines, and the chance to attend school or college once settled in a locality.



## **Support from family and friends**

Contact with friends and family is very important to children's wellbeing. Any opportunities to be in contact face to face or digitally with family and friends will greatly support your child's wellbeing. Social support for you as parents and carers is also important, especially as many families will be separated and you may be worrying about loved ones still in Ukraine or travelling to safety.

This separation may mean family roles need to change and having the chance to speak to others in a similar situation is likely to be really helpful to you as parents and caregivers to help you adjust to your new living situation.

## **Loss and Bereavement**

Where children have been bereaved during the conflict they may have had little chance to grieve and participate in mourning with their family. They may worry about upsetting family members by letting them know how sad or upset they are feeling. Children may also be worried about family members who are still in a dangerous situation and may need a chance to talk about these fears.

Let children take the lead and if they do want to talk, it is usually most helpful to listen carefully to what the child or young person is feeling and worrying about. You can support children by helping them to identify what and who helps them to feel better. There are resources about listening to children on the [Parentclub Scotland](#) website.

Children may also feel very angry about the crisis and being able to talk about this and to be listened to carefully can help them to manage feelings and thoughts. It is important to remember that these are all normal reactions to terrible events. Children and young people might feel very overwhelmed by their feelings and reactions, and it will be important to listen to them carefully and help them talk about their feelings.

There are a number of useful resources on the ISC website relating to the current Ukrainian situation and specifically to children:

<https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-reference-group-on-mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-in-emergency-settings#:~:text=The%20Guidelines%20help%20to%20plan,was%20established%20in%20December%202007>

How children react to a crisis depends on their age and developmental stage. All the ordinary needs and interests that children have will continue to be important.

Their reaction to the crisis will be affected by the ways their caregivers and other adults interact with them and it's important to give them space to be children, to have their needs met, be loved and cared for and have time for play and enjoying the activities they usually take part in where possible.

Young children may not fully understand what is happening around them, and may show distress through changes in behaviour, for example:

- bed wetting or nightmares
- complaining of physical aches and pains
- being especially worried about being separated from close family.

It is a normal reaction for children who have experienced a distressing situation to regress and begin to show behaviours associated with younger age groups. Younger children will be especially in need of support from caregivers. In general, all children cope better when they have a stable, calm adult around them. In order to provide this support, it's important that you look after your own wellbeing and make sure you have support systems in place for yourself. It is also helpful to protect them from watching or hearing the news so they can feel calm and safe where they are now.

If your child seems distressed, and you think they need help, a helpful thing to use is called **Psychological First Aid (PFA)**. PFA involves caring about the child, paying attention to their needs, using active listening and giving practical advice. PFA is not professional therapy or encouraging conversations about the cause of distress.

Babies may also become more unsettled or have other changes in their behaviour. The ['wellbeing for Wee Ones'](#) campaign provides practical advice to support the ways parents and caregivers interact with babies and very young children. For babies and toddlers, the more predictable you can make their worlds the more they will feel safe so thinking about things like feeding routines and nappy changing routines and the rhythm of calm talking, singing and telling stories will all help the baby to feel more settled.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID FOR EVERYONE

Psychological First Aid (PFA) is a way of helping both adults and children cope with distress and it is something anyone can do. The focus is to help you and your children get basic needs met such as access to safety, food, and shelter and getting access to social support and information. The social support is best provided by people that you know and/or have similar experiences to you. It is also important to note that not everyone who is in distress may need or want PFA.

The seven ideas in PFA are: care for your immediate needs; protect yourself from risk of further harms; be comforted; get support for practical tasks; get information you need on how to cope; connect with people you know; be educated about normal psychological responses.



This is explained in this diagram from NHS Education Board for Scotland diagram:



In summary, you and your family are more likely to be able to psychologically cope with and recover from the trauma you have experienced if you:

- feel safe and are in calm supportive environments
- have access to practical social, physical, and emotional support that is not intrusive
- feel able to help yourself, as an individual and in your local connections and communities
- you feel listened to them but do not feel pressurised to talk

You can find out more about Psychological First Aid via Turas Learn<sup>3</sup>.

There are some very helpful ideas for supporting children's play here on Parent Club at [Helping your child through play | Parent Club](#). [Child Friendly Spaces At Home Activity Cards \(English\)](#) have ideas for play activities that can help children talk about and manage feelings and develop ways to cope. The 'Wellbeing for Wee Ones' campaign has lots of advice for supporting babies and younger children.

## REMEMBER...

**Everyone will respond in very different ways to the very difficult situation you have been through – there is no wrong or right way to feel or react.** Be kind to yourself, and those you love, and give yourself time to adjust to this difficult situation. Seek out support from those who know you the best and keep connected with family and friends as best as you can. Seek specialist help if you feel you need and try not to judge your own emotional reactions to an understandably very difficult situation.

We hope this guide helps you find the information, support, and help you may need.

<sup>3</sup> \*Registration with Turas Learn is necessary, but **anyone with an email address can register**. You can register for an account [with Turas here](#).



## Appendix 4

### Resources

[Free Ukrainian, Polish, And Russian Translations Of Trauma And PTSD Psychoeducational Resources - Psychology Tools](#)

[Asylum seeker and refugee mental health | Royal College of Psychiatrists \(rcpsych.ac.uk\)](#)

Beacon House have a resource on “Talking to Children About War and Conflict: [Talking to children about war and conflict \(beaconhouse.org.uk\)](#)

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network “ Taking to Children about War” [talking-to-children-about-war.pdf \(nctsn.org\)](#)

Doing what Matters at a time of Stress and illustrated Guide: <https://app.mhpss.net/?get=372/9789240003910-eng.pdf>

Responding to the psychosocial needs of people affected by emergencies: [4 Caring for People Over Time - Preparing Scotland: responding to the psychosocial and mental health needs of people affected by emergencies - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

Supporting Adults Affected by Traumatic Incidents (British Psychological Society): [Supporting Adults involved in major incidents V2.pdf \(bps.org.uk\)](#)

The Scottish Refugee Council: [Home - Scottish Refugee Council](#)

NHS Education Scotland: <https://www.sad.scot.nhs.uk/bereavement/communication-with-those-who-are-bereaved>

The World Trauma Foundation, World Health Organisation and World Vision International : Psychological first aid for fieldworkers: <https://app.mhpss.net/?get=402/1321788909-PFAGuideforFieldworkers.pdf>

MHPSS.net Emergency Briefing Kit – Ukraine – Russia Conflict (2022): [Ukraine - Russia Conflict Emergency Briefing 2022 \(estss.org\)](#)

The United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Reference Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings have produced a wide range of helpful resources that has been recently updated to include the current crisis in Ukraine:

[IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings, 2007 | IASC \(interagencystandingcommittee.org\)](#)

The British Psychological Society has produced a useful guide about how to support people affected by major events: [Supporting Adults involved in major incidents V2.pdf \(bps.org.uk\)](#)





Many adults and children will also have experienced bereavement, and may not have had chance to grieve or to mourn in ways familiar for their family. The link below offers ideas about how to speak to people who have lost a loved one

<https://www.sad.scot.nhs.uk/bereavement/communication-with-those-who-are-bereaved>

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Mental Health and Psychosocial Support, Humanitarian Response in Ukraine and Neighbouring Countries:

<https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-reference-group-mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-emergency-settings/mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-humanitarian-response-ukraine-and-neighbouring-countries>

[Alzheimer Scotland Helpline: 24 hour Freephone Dementia Helpline | Alzheimer Scotland \(alzscot.org\)](http://alzscot.org)

Social Work Standby Services are services that operate out of hours and liaise with relevant partner agencies regarding any calls that are received out of ours. They can be contacted as follows:

Glasgow and Partners Emergency Social Work Services – 0300 343 1505

Edinburgh Emergency Out of Hours Social Work Services – 0131-200-2324

Ayrshire Out of Hours Emergency Social Work Services – 0800 328 7758

Dumfries and Galloway Out of Hours Social Work Services – 01387 273660

Highland Council Out of Hours Social Work Team – 08457 697284

#### Specific Resources for Children

[Psychological First Aid for Young Peers: A handbook – Psychosocial Support IFRC \(pscentre.org\)](http://pscentre.org)

[I Support My Friends Resource Kit – The MHPSS Network](#)

Child Friendly Spaces At Home Activity Cards: [Child Friendly Spaces At Home Activity Cards \(English\)](#)

The CELCIS online resource brings together advice, guidance and information for people working with and supporting child refugees and their families: [Supporting child refugees and their families :: Celcis](#)

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network: Psychological First Aid for Displaced Children and Families: [pfa-for-displaced-children-and-families.pdf \(nctsn.org\)](#)

[Psychological First Aid for Unaccompanied Children | The National Child Traumatic Stress Network \(nctsn.org\)](#)