



Scottish Government Update – Temporary Welcome Accommodation

Dear guest,

You are currently staying in temporary welcome accommodation. You may hold a Scottish Super Sponsor visa, or another type of visa under a Ukrainian scheme.

We are writing to inform you about:

- how you will be supported to move on from welcome accommodation
- changes to who can access welcome accommodation
- what happens if you leave welcome accommodation temporarily

The changes outlined in this letter apply to you regardless of which visa type you hold. These changes do not affect your visa status.

Moving on from temporary welcome accommodation

Your stay in welcome accommodation is intended to be for no more than six months and you should aim to move on as soon as possible. This will help you settle into life in Scotland as well as ensure welcome accommodation is available for those who need it most.

Where possible you should arrange your own longer-term accommodation.

From 7 December 2023, your local authority will do their best to work with you to identify up to two reasonable options for longer-term accommodation.

Reasonable options for longer-term accommodation

A reasonable option for longer-term accommodation could be:

- an option made to you by your local authority, which may include hosted accommodation or a safe and affordable tenancy
- a successful application for housing

For more information about what is meant by a reasonable option, scan the QR code at the end of this document and read the 'Arrival in Scotland' chapter.

It is your responsibility to speak to your local authority and tell them about any specific needs that you or someone in your household has that may impact the type

of property or location that may be suitable for your household. This could be in relation to health, education or caring needs.

You should also make your local authority aware if there are any reasons why you might find it difficult to consider options that have been made to you, or anything that makes it difficult for you to apply for housing.

It is very important to remember that Scotland is experiencing a housing crisis. This means across the country there is limited housing in both the private rented sector and the social rented sector. It is very unlikely you will receive more than one option of a tenancy in most cases.

The process for identifying longer-term accommodation options varies across local authority areas. Your local authority may make you an option of a tenancy directly, or they may help you to make an application for housing.

You are expected to work with your local authority to make applications for housing and to carefully consider any options made to you.

The timescales for how long it takes to identify options may vary from one local authority to another.

You must respond to your option within the timescale set out in the offer. If you think an option being made to you does not meet the definition of reasonable, you can ask your local authority to review the option.

If you refuse both options of accommodation, you may remain in welcome accommodation for whichever is longer of:

- a maximum of 180 nights from the date you first entered welcome accommodation
- a maximum of 60 nights from the date you refused your second option

If you do not respond to your local authority's attempts to contact you, or if you do not engage with your local authority to make housing applications, you will be notified by your local authority that you are required to leave welcome accommodation within 60 days.

Temporary absences from welcome accommodation

From 8 January 2024, if you leave your welcome accommodation for longer than 5 nights without agreement from your local authority, you will not be able to return to stay in any temporary welcome accommodation. This means you will need to make your own accommodation arrangements on your return.



Speak to your local authority in advance of any travel if you wish to return to welcome accommodation after an absence of more than 5 consecutive nights.

Your local authority may permit returning to welcome accommodation in certain circumstances, for example if your travel:

- related to medical treatment
- related to short-term immediate family reunification
- was to check on property in Ukraine, or for administrative reasons
- was for reasons relating to mental health and wellbeing

Before you make travel plans, you must get agreement from your local authority. If you do not, or if they disagree that your reason for leaving falls under the above exceptions, in most cases, you will not be able to return to any welcome accommodation. Your local authority may ask you to provide evidence for your absence from welcome accommodation if it is more than 5 nights.

Please note that any items left behind will be handled according to the luggage policies of your welcome accommodation and this may result in personal items not being kept.

Wider changes to use of temporary welcome accommodation

You should be aware that from 8 January 2024, people displaced from Ukraine will only be offered temporary welcome accommodation if:

- they hold a Scottish Super Sponsor visa (you are sponsored by the Scottish Government under the Homes for Ukraine scheme) and
- it is their first arrival in Scotland

Visits by friends and family over festive period

If you have family or friends visiting Scotland over the festive period, they will not be eligible to stay in welcome accommodation. They must make their own accommodation arrangements.

Further information and support

If you have any questions or need further information and support, please talk to your local authority if you are in Scotland.

Staying safe in Scotland is important. If you ever feel unsafe, please talk to your local authority, or in emergencies, call the police on 999.



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If you are under the age of 18 and are in Scotland without your parent or legal guardian, please speak to a member of your local authority resettlement or social work team. They can ensure that any alternative care arrangements can be made for

you, as appropriate. This will not affect your visa status, but will allow the local authority to ensure you are fully supported.

You can find out more by reading the Scottish Government guidance for displaced people. Please scan the QR code below and read the 'Arrival in Scotland' chapter.



The Scottish Refugee Council can also give you help and advice about living in Scotland. You can contact the Scottish Refugee Council's free helpline on 0808 196 7274 or on their website. Please visit www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/ukraine/ to find out more.