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By Maria Leedham
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Finding a local class

The UK government assigns responsibility for English language classes to local councils (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-sponsor-guidance#adapting-to-life-in-the-uk>).

Once you have a Ukrainian guest, your local council should email you with a link to the support they can offer; alternatively you could search online for your council name and 'Ukraine'. This is likely to include a list of local language schools, colleges and community organisations which can offer free or lowcost English language lessons for Ukrainian refugees. These may be for Ukrainians only or may be part of larger provision for refugees or for anyone requiring English language classes.

If you are in a local WhatsApp or Facebook support group, it is worth asking group members for any current information on English language learning. Perhaps one group member could email or ring the different organisations offering classes and share the information with the group. Many of the free classes are run by volunteers as 'conversation classes' only; such classes may be for a short time on particular days e.g. 2 hour classes on Thursday evening and Saturday morning. While useful, your guests may wish to take a more intensive course.

Note that local colleges often run classes on a term-time only basis. While language schools generally run courses year-round, they are likely to have set start dates. Both colleges and language schools usually have placement tests of 1-2 hours which your guest will need to take to determine the most suitable class for them. Some organisations offer refugees 'spare' places in classes either free or at a reduced cost.

Even if free classes are not advertised, it is still worth asking language schools and colleges if they would consider offering a free or reduced-cost place. Once your guest has registered with the local Job Centre, they can ask for funding towards the cost of English language classes as financial assistance towards finding a job.

Questions to ask before joining a class

1. What are the term dates and fees? Times of classes?
2. How many students are there in a class? What is the mix of nationalities/languages spoken?
3. What is the range of levels in the class?
4. How many teachers are there?
5. Is there a coursebook and is this included in the fee?
6. Is the class working towards an exam?
7. Is it possible to take a free trial class?

Information from Facebook

It is probably worth joining Facebook if you are not already a member in order to access the many resources available for hosts and guests on the Homes4Ukraine (H4U) scheme (you don't have to post or provide any personal information to be on Facebook). Each area of the UK (county, city, town) with Ukrainian refugees has a Facebook group for the H4U scheme. In general, these are 'private', meaning you have to join the group to access posts and information. At the top of some groups, in the 'files' section, you'll find useful, current information on different areas e.g. language learning (key phrases, English classes); life in the UK (housing costs, claiming Universal Credit).

The following are UK-wide sites which are worth joining for the extensive information provided in the 'files' section alone:

- OPORA: sponsors in the UK (6,000 members) <https://www.facebook.com/oporaukraine/>
- OPORA website <https://opora.uk/> UK accommodation for Ukrainian refugees (90,000 members) UK accommodation for Ukrainian refugees.
- Sunflower Sisters – Ukraine/UK (33,000 members). <https://sunflowersisters.co.uk/>

In addition to Facebook groups, most areas have a WhatsApp group for local hosts and one for Ukrainian guests. These are a good source of information and support.

Free language learning

- One-to-one conversation

As host, you are no doubt talking to your guest regularly. If you have time and your guest's level of English is similar to your Ukrainian, you could try studying parts of your Ukrainian course with your guest. As you learn the Ukrainian for greetings, family members, food and drink, etc. your guest could learn the English at the same time. You could do the online activities together.

However, you may not be able to offer sufficient time and it will help your guest learn English, if they interact with different people. It is likely that in your area there are people who would like to support Ukrainian refugees but are not able to host: you could ask in your local community for anyone willing to offer an hour a week of conversation or 121 teaching.

- Online classes

At the time of writing, there are several free or low-cost online classes for refugees. For example, the British Council offers live online classes, self-study courses and one-to-one tutoring but these are not all free: <https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/online-courses>. The Open University also provides free online resources and courses in English language: [Free online resources for Ukrainians settling in the UK and Ireland - OpenLearn - Open University](#). You could additionally try an online search for classes and also ask for recommendations amongst your local community.

- Online resources

Below are a few online links to the many free online resources now available.

- Duolingo <https://www.duolingo.com>

Short, daily learning to maintain motivation (NB they also offer Ukrainian and Russian)

- Cambridge English <https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/learning-english/>

Online activities – some aimed at children – including audio, writing practice and exam preparation.

- British Council <https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/getting-started-free-resources>

Offers a free online test to give an idea of proficiency level, live online events, resources for skills/grammar/vocabulary practice.

- BBC Learning English <https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/>

Lots of short audio and video resources with activities. Activities for business use and for children too.

If you have any questions, tips, ideas or further information about learning English, please post on the 'Learning English' thread of the Knowledge Exchange Forum.