

# **UNITED FOR UKRAINE**

## Update on the initiative

December 2022



[www.unitedforukraine.org.uk](http://www.unitedforukraine.org.uk)







# INTRODUCTION

FROM

## TIM JEFFERY

Partnership & Integration Manager – The Growth Company

**Together, with your support, we're continuing to make a difference to the lives of Ukrainian's who have come to the UK because of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine – but we still need your help...**

This is the first edition of a quarterly communication to all our employment partners and stakeholders who are supporting [United For Ukraine](#). We plan to update you on how the initiative is performing – and with your help is continuing to support businesses and improve the lives of refugees who are looking for employment and education support.

It's an opportunity to celebrate our collective achievements and raise awareness of the work involved behind the scenes to maintain and drive the initiative forwards. It's also a chance to understand where we need to go further and use our collective networks and connections to encourage more employers to come on board and join the initiative.

In this first update, you can read about our two key worker colleagues who support many of the initiative's day-to-day services. We'll also demonstrate that we're playing our part and introduce you to four Ukrainian colleagues recently employed by The Growth Company. This pack also includes some of the initiative's media coverage and provides tools to help you raise awareness of the initiative via your social media channels.

### Spreading the word

In November, I hosted a webinar event for businesses to ask questions about the initiative and encourage them to take part and share their job vacancies on the [jobs board](#) on the United for Ukraine website.

It was really encouraging to see so many businesses logging on - and keen to get involved. I provided a bit of background about how United for Ukraine came into being – and talked through how simple it is for employers to upload a vacancy onto the website (for free). I'm always happy to talk employers through the site, so if you want to know more, please reach out.

The success of United for Ukraine is reliant on employers being willing to offer-up job opportunities. I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who's helped so far.

### We attended the Great Northern Conference

In November, we were invited to exhibit at **The Great Northern Conference** at University Academy 92 in Manchester. This was a great opportunity for us to showcase the initiative to business leaders, key stakeholders in the public and third sectors and elected representatives.

We were overwhelmed by the positive feedback and support we received. It was great to share the success of the initiative with the key partners who've made this happen including: North West Business Leadership Team, The Northern Powerhouse Partnership, Northern Power Women and many more...

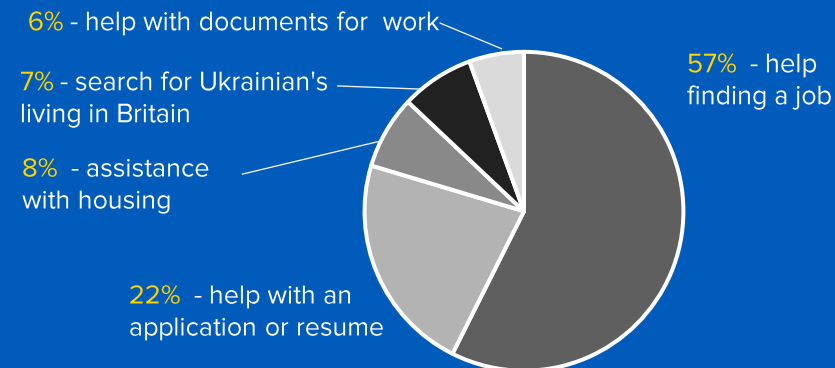
*Tim*

[www.unitedforukraine.org.uk](http://www.unitedforukraine.org.uk) [timothy.jeffrey@gcemployment.uk](mailto:timothy.jeffrey@gcemployment.uk)

## Feedback from clients we've helped

We recently reached out to Ukrainian's who we've supported through the initiative to better understand how our services have helped them. 93% of those who responded said they'd recommend the initiative to friends and relatives and 40% told us that we helped them find a job.

### Why they visited the United for Ukraine website



We're supporting

**100** employers



**300** jobs posted  
on the website



We've helped

**+1000** Ukrainians



**100** jobs starts  
through the initiative

A RECAP ON

# HOW YOU CAN HELP

As a business and an employer, the United for Ukraine initiative provides an easy and direct way to communicate job opportunities to Ukrainian nationals coming to the UK. The site also provides a wide range of information of further support that your new colleagues may find helpful.

Post A Job

Further Support

Providing good opportunities with supportive businesses who appreciate the challenging circumstances Ukrainians are facing is essential in helping their ongoing complex situation.

Employment plays a key role in helping Ukrainians adjust to living in the UK and given the unique circumstances, we are seeking employers who understand the circumstances of Ukrainian evacuees and who'll provide job opportunities which include the prerequisites outlined below.

The [website](#) accommodates employers who have a single job opportunity, or have multiple opportunities to share.

Following a quick review, employers may be contacted by one of our colleagues who'll then place your role vacancy on the [jobs page](#) on the United for Ukraine website.

The site also provides a wide range of information on further support that your new colleagues may find helpful.

## JOB OPPORTUNITIES MUST:

Be available for a minimum of **three months**.



Contain **salary details**.



Pay at least **Real Living wage of £10.90 per hour** and the **appropriate rate** for the role.



Be **contactable via a telephone number** rather than an online only application.





## MEET OUR KEY WORKERS

Okszana Nepijvoda and Marianna Vaszilyiv work for The Growth Company and are both key workers (project assistants) whose job is to provide the day-to-day support for the United for Ukraine initiative and the services it provides.

We asked Marianna and Okszana to tell us how they found themselves supporting the United for Ukraine initiative: what's involved in the services we provide, and what this means to them. Marianna told us:

"I was working on the Work & Health programme with The Growth Company for almost a year when I heard about the plans to launch the United for Ukraine initiative. They were looking for Ukrainian speakers to join the project, and I speak both English and Ukrainian and I was offered to join the initiative for a trial period, because we didn't know how long we'd need it for, as everyone was hoping the war would finish within a couple of months.

"I'm now a key worker in the initiative and help people to find their feet in the system of employment and education in the UK. I also signpost people to third party services and provide networking links with other organisations so we can help people and refer them. The role is a bit like an adviser and referral service."

Okszana told us that she came to the UK as a teaching assistant and her plan was to go university to do her PGSE qualification and become a teacher here in England. When the war started, she decided to become a full-time volunteer. She explains what happened:

"For the first few months, my time was invested in lots of initiatives in and around Manchester and sending items back home to Ukraine in huge lorries. To be honest, in practical terms, I realised that working in this way for many months wasn't enough if you have a family to support - and to live without money isn't a good thing long-term.

"I saw the job advert for the role to be part of the United for Ukraine initiative and I applied and I got the job. I was a bit surprised because I've never worked in this field - I was a biology and chemistry teacher in Ukraine."

Marianna told us that the resistance and resilience of Ukrainians coming into the UK continues to amaze her – especially considering they're now living in a different country, with a different mindset and different education and social support systems. She explains how this has motivated her to put her career plans on hold:

"I'm ambitious and part of my professional journey was to grow professionally. My plan was to stay in the UK for a year and learn some new things and develop myself further. I had been looking for other opportunities, but I decided to stop looking because it was clear that I'm developing myself doing this job – I'm at the right moment at the right place, which I'm committed to until the war is over. I have to do this job because I can change someone's life."

Okszana told us that the war in Ukraine has also changed her life and her plans - and why she's become a key worker for the United for Ukraine initiative:

"It's a big surprise for me to be working for The Growth Company – I never ever in my life dreamed about this. It feels like changing schools to work for this company. I'm not just here because The Growth Company pays me money. Not many people are lucky in their lives to do what they want to do – you have to be very lucky to feel that it's a job that's coming from your heart. This is a job that I feel and love to do. I'm passionate about this job."



# AND **ADDING VALUE** **GIVING HOPE**

**Marianna and Okszana share how they know they're making a difference through the services they offer to Ukrainians looking for employment and education advice - and how they can relate to the people they meet and support.**

Marianna explains that we've had over 100 job starts so far - and that's a great figure. She told us that those who have got jobs now are definitely being supported by the businesses who've employed them:

"It's very important to establish good links with businesses and do some networking – it's been a crucial part of the initiative, especially with local authorities all over Greater Manchester, the Department of Education and Job Centre Plus. It's very important to work hand-in-hand and collaborate. If I can't help with a person's query, I need to know where to direct them to."



Okszana Nepijvoda - left, Marianna Vaszilyiv - right



Watch this short video where Marianna and Okszana explain how they're making a difference.



Okszana told us that, she feels because she and Marianna are Ukrainian and they've lived in this country for 8-9 years, they can give their clients recommendations, advice and answers to most of the questions they get asked:

"We've got to remember that for most Ukrainians, living in the UK is a totally different reality – they were not prepared to live and work in this country. For each success and piece of advice that we're thanked for providing, it makes me happy. Sometimes we have 20 calls a day and giving just some simple advice, or sharing something so they don't make a mistake, is so rewarding."

They told us that, when they receive messages from people saying that 'we've changed their lives' and 'we've been a vital part in their introduction to the UK', it makes it all worthwhile. Marianna explains:

"It's the biggest motivation I receive in the role. Because knowing I was a turning point in someone's life means a lot to me, and many people have managed to find a job and boost their confidence because of the support I've provided."

Sometimes, as part of supporting the service as a key worker, Marianna and Okszana hear stories that are really not nice, and the people they're helping are having a tough time – Okszana explains that she can relate to their situation and part of her role is to motivate and support them:

"It's part of the job and we can help the people and give them hope. Just because they may be currently applying for jobs in a warehouse doesn't mean they're going to be there for the rest of their lives. I can relate to the people I'm helping and I've been on their journey – I've cleaned houses, washed dishes in kitchens, and after completing an English course and then a teaching assistant course, I eventually got a job in a school. So I know the stages, the opportunities, the challenges, and questions they each can bring. I know what they're feeling – I know how it is."

# UNDOING SOME MISCONCEPTIONS

A valuable part of the service which Marianna and Okszana provide is to give clarity to both Ukrainians and our employment partners – often to dispel myths and ambiguities which have spread by word-of-mouth, or have been miscommunicated on the internet. They also help the Ukrainian refugees navigate the culture gap between working and living in the UK compared to back home.

Marianna explains that the service they provide helps to spread awareness of Ukraine, because many people don't know anything about her country.

"Employers here in the UK didn't expect that back in Ukraine we had three quarters of the population with higher education qualifications - and most speak English. I recently received a call from the National Careers Service and after they'd chatted with some Ukrainian's that I'd referred to the service - they told me they were surprised that they spoke English and they could understand them."

The system of employment is very different here in the UK compared to Ukraine. There are many more steps and preparations to go through before starting a new job. Marianna told us that this can cause some confusion. There's been some misunderstanding across the Ukrainian community around this - which they've had to take time to explain:

"In Ukraine, if you have a qualification, you're expected to know everything inside out about the area you'll be working in. If you have a relevant qualification, back home you're expected to jump into the role and get started on 'day 2'. In the UK, there's much more training and validation you need to do – alongside pre-employment checks."

Interview experiences are different in Ukraine too – where you're just expected to show what you can do. Marianna explains:

"In the UK, you're also expected to sell yourself and your skills in a positive way in an interview – if you have something to celebrate and great personal qualities to share, you have to show them and get them across. This is why we've spent time preparing people for mock interviews."

## Attending recruitment events is key



At a recent recruitment event at Manchester Central Library, Marianna helped Anna who's a Doctor (GP) from Ukraine. Marianna also helped introduce Anna to other skills providers at the event, to provide more employment opportunities.



"The United for Ukraine team have helped me today at the recruitment event at Manchester Central Library and I plan to use the United for Ukraine Services and also join the Work & Health programme - Anna Boikot"



# ***EACH DAY PRESENTS*** ***NEW CHALLENGES***

**As with any initiative that's launched to reactively support an event or situation, there'll be some initial teething problems - things which present challenges to both the services provided and the teams delivering them.**

Marianna told us that listening to the emotional side of some people's stories can be hard to hear. When people come to see them at recruitment events, they don't just hear about their employment and skills needs, they also listen to their personal stories – as much as they're happy to share:

"Sometimes it's really difficult to be indifferent and not get involved and give advice – that's not my role, I'm not a coach or a mental health expert. I've got to keep a balance and remain professional. These are people from the country where I was born and I sometimes feel what they are experiencing is happening to me. There are some days when I'm fully drained, but the belief the conflict will finish soon keeps me going."

She explains that the biggest challenge she's encountered so far has been keeping a balance across her emotions when she hears the stories from the people she's helping:

"It's not just the war in Ukraine or in Europe to me – it's my personal war as well. I have to be professional first and do my job well and be careful to not slip into the emotional side of it and take care of my mental wellbeing. It's been working quite well – so far, so good."

Okszana told us that, people come to the service asking some simple questions and with Marianna, she helps these people to believe in themselves - that they can live in this country and make a start – it'll be hard and be totally different to Ukraine, but everything will be alright:

"Ukrainians are hard-working – we know that nothing in life comes easy. The reality is that there are just not enough suitable jobs – for example, it's hard to find jobs for mums with school kids who want to work the hours when kids are in school."

The language barrier can also be an added challenge to recruitment. Okszana explains that most are studying for the ESOL qualification (English for Speakers of Other Languages) – which can take up to six months – but they don't have six months to wait.:

"Sometimes they're failing on some basic training and on initial interview calls because they don't know how to respond – and this is for warehouse-type jobs which they're more than skilled to do. They are coming from Ukraine and they are teachers, they are managers, they are doctors, they are highly educated people and they're happy to work whilst they learn the language – but they still can't get the jobs."



## **A friendly face who speaks Ukrainian is welcomed**

Attending recruitment events allows Marianna and Okszana to help support any challenges presented by the language barrier and if needed, provide an interpretation service when introducing Ukrainians' to the employers and learning providers.

"Because of the language barrier, I wasn't able to get the information I needed at the recruitment event. Marianna was very helpful and introduced me to the employers and people at the event who could help me with courses for adults."

**– Anastasiya Hzebenchenko**

# **SHARING SUCCESS**

## **RAISING AWARENESS**

As a key worker on the United for Ukraine Initiative, there are lots of behind the scenes activities involved in making sure the Manchester and North of England business communities know we're here to support – from using social media to attending events.

Marianna and Okszana told us that it's important to celebrate and shout about their successes and promote the United for Ukraine initiative. Marianna told us:

"Sharing your personal story can help to play a vital role in someone else's life. That's why in any meetings I attend, I like to introduce my story because I've managed to achieve some great things in my life in the UK. I've received some great feedback where people have told me they've seen that I've done it – so it's motivated them too."

Okszana explained that she's seen some great success stories from people she's helped through the initiative. She gave the example of a Ukrainian lady in her late 60s who's recently started work in a new role as a teaching assistant in a school. She started with the belief that this would never be possible. Through the initiative's support services and a little confidence building, new careers and opportunities are being unfolded. She added that, their work is far from done and they need to keep raising awareness of the initiative:

"I have the feeling all the time that what we're doing is not enough – we need to do more, it's literally non-stop. Just seeing all those people who are feeling desperate about jobs and education... I understand that no one had a plan for what's happening now."



Left – right: Marianna Vaszilyiv, Shcherbata Tetiaiva, Ibaiv Chcherbatyi, Kutsenko Anzhela, Okszana Nepijvoda.

Marianna added that, alongside providing recruitment and educational advice and referrals, sometimes it's just about being there as a friendly Ukrainian face. She used the example of Ibaiv Chcherbatyi and his family who arrived in the UK two months ago, but were still finding it difficult knowing where to go to for the right advice and support. She told us:

"At job fairs, when Ukrainian's see us, they're simply happy that they can cuddle us and they can cry, because they can see how we can support them."



# THE GROWTH COMPANY

WELCOMES

## 4 UKRAINIAN COLLEAGUES

Alongside our Key Workers, we've recently welcomed 4 additional Ukrainian colleagues into roles within The Growth Company through the initiative.

Raisa Skidan

Rehina Menchykova

Yulia Melnyk

Anna Korotiuk

### Rehina Menchykova

**Time in the UK:** 8 Months  
**Original home city:** Cherkasy  
**Profession in Ukraine:** Pharmaceutical Engineering  
**Role at The Growth Company:** Administrator - Skills for Growth

### Anna Korotiuk

**Time in the UK:** 7 Months  
**Original home city:** Kherson  
**Profession in Ukraine:** English Teacher  
**Role at The Growth Company:** Administrator – Skills for Growth

### Yulia Melnyk

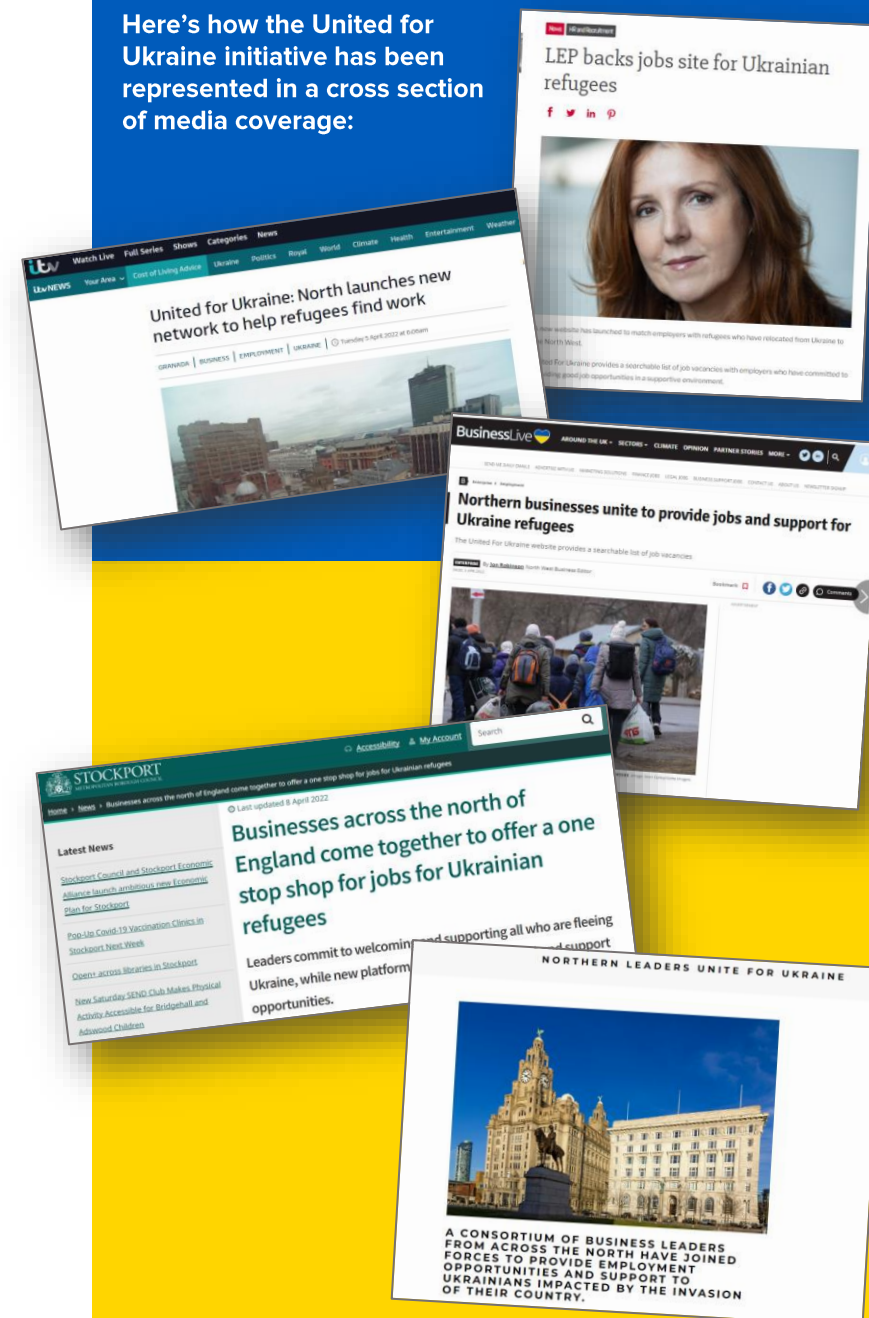
**Time in the UK:** 8 Months  
**Original home city:** Cherkasy  
**Profession in Ukraine:** Account Specialist at Harris Computer (medical sphere)  
**Role at The Growth Company:** Commercial Assistant – Marketing Manchester

### Raisa Skidan

**Time in the UK:** 6 Months  
**Original home city:** Mariupol  
**Profession in Ukraine:** English Teacher  
**Role at The Growth Company:** Safeguarding Administrator

## In the media

Here's how the United for Ukraine initiative has been represented in a cross section of media coverage:



# SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLKIT

This toolkit includes social media and newsletter/website copy for partners to promote the United for Ukraine initiative, including signposting to the website.

Please share on your own social channels, website, internally with your colleagues, across your networks and in any relevant newsletters.






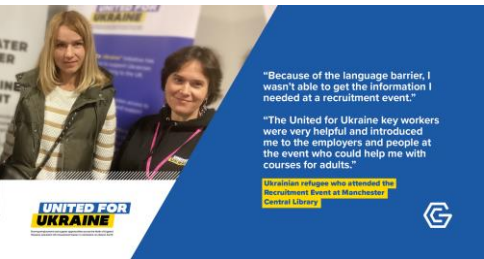
CHANNEL	GRAPHIC	POST COPY
		<p>We're proud to be an employment partner supporting the United for Ukraine initiative.</p> <p>Launched in April 2022, it's a coalition brought together at the request of leaders from across the North, including the Northern Powerhouse Partnership and North West Business Leadership Team (NWBLT), with support from the NP11 group of Local Enterprise Partnerships. For Ukrainian nationals, and other refugees who are eligible, the United For Ukraine website provides a searchable list of job vacancies with employers who have committed to providing good job opportunities in a supportive environment.</p> <p>The success of United for Ukraine is reliant on employers like us being willing to offer-up job opportunities. Watch this video and visit the website to find out how your business can get involved in the initiative and what jobs are currently available: <a href="https://youtu.be/pvRi2iKVVxY">https://youtu.be/pvRi2iKVVxY</a> <a href="https://unitedforukraine.org.uk/">https://unitedforukraine.org.uk/</a> #unitedforukraine</p>
		<p>We're proud to be an employment partner supporting the United for Ukraine initiative, helping Ukrainian nationals looking for employment. Join us - watch this video to find out more: <a href="https://youtu.be/pvRi2iKVVxY">https://youtu.be/pvRi2iKVVxY</a> <a href="https://unitedforukraine.org.uk/">https://unitedforukraine.org.uk/</a></p>
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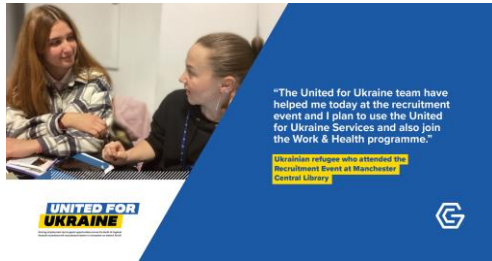

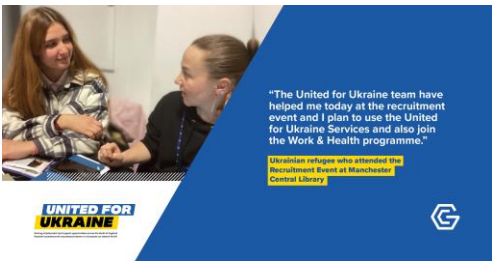
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		<p>For Ukrainian nationals, the United For Ukraine website provides job vacancies with employers like us. The service offers-up more than job opportunities, watch this video to find out more: <a href="https://youtu.be/pvRi2jKVVxY">https://youtu.be/pvRi2jKVVxY</a> <a href="https://unitedforukraine.org.uk/">https://unitedforukraine.org.uk/</a></p>
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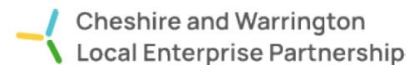
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# **OUR** **PARTNERS**

[www.unitedforukraine.org.uk](http://www.unitedforukraine.org.uk)



Work that matters.  
Creative Concern.

