

Driving in the UK



Contents

1. [Driving Licences](#)
2. [Provisional Driving Licences](#)
3. [Driving in the UK](#)
4. [Driving Lessons and Practicing Driving](#)
5. [Insurance](#)
6. [Brining a car from Ukraine](#)
7. [Losing Your Vehicle](#)
8. [Buying and Owning A UK Car](#)
9. [Selling a Car](#)

Herefordshire Community Network

Support for Ukraine – information for guests

1. Driving Licences

To drive in the UK you must have:

- A valid, full driving licence (not a learner's licence)
- Up to date motor insurance for the car you wish to drive

You should also read about the [legal obligations of drivers](#) on the gov.uk website.

The original terms given to Ukrainian nationals coming to the UK was that, if your current licence was valid, you could drive for 3 years in the UK using your Ukraine driving licence. This was extended in 2025. If you arrived on the Homes for Ukraine Scheme (HFU) or the Ukraine Family Scheme (UFS) before 3pm on 19th February 2024, OR if you arrived on the Ukraine Extension Scheme (UES) before 11:59pm on 16th May 2024, then this 3-year period has been extended to 4 years and 6 months.

If you have a licence, you can use it to drive small vehicles like:

- Motorcycles
- Cars
- Vehicles that weigh up to 3,500kg or with 8 passenger seats

To continue to drive for longer than these periods, then you need to exchange your Ukrainian driving licence for a UK licence.



If you break the law, for example are caught driving dangerously or too fast, then you get 'points' on your driving licence. If you have 12 or more points on your licence in a 3-year period then you can be banned from driving.

2. Provisional Driving Licences

When driving in the UK whilst learning you must use 'L' plates. You must put an 'L' plate on the front and back of your vehicle so that they can be seen easily. In Wales this is a 'D' plate instead of an 'L' plate.

An 'L' or 'D' plate must:

- Have a red L or D on a white background
- Be the [right size](#)



You can get up to 6 penalty points if you do not display an L plate or if it's not the right size.

You should take L plates off your vehicle when it's not being used by a learner.

Herefordshire Community Network

Support for Ukraine – information for guests

3. Driving In The UK

Correct driving in the UK is laid out in [The Highway Code](#). This will explain general driving expectations, road signs and rules of the road. To get a British licence you will need to prove you understand this code by passing a Driving Theory Test.

It might be specifically helpful for you to note the following:

- **Having a decent SAT NAV is very useful** for driving in the UK, especially around cities. There maybe many different routes to get to your destination. Using the SAT NAV built into Google maps will take into account traffic and accidents.
- **In Herefordshire there are some VERY small lanes**, these maybe the quickest route but not necessarily the easiest. It might be worth planning your route before setting off if you are nervous about reversing or driving in narrow lanes.
- **Speed limits can change quickly without noticing**. Speed limits in residential areas are USUALLY 30 miles per hour (mph) in urban areas, so if there are no signs, assume this is the case. In Wales urban areas have a 20mph speed limit. A white circle with a black diagonal line means a 'national speed limit, this is usually 60mph.
- **Junctions in the UK can be complicated in cities**, make sure you are familiar with roundabouts (rotaries), one way systems and traffic lights.
- **It is illegal to drive whilst using a mobile phone in the UK**. You can use a hands free device or Bluetooth connected to your car.
- **Speed cameras (both fixed and mobile units) are a regular sight on British roads. If caught driving over the speed limit, you will receive penalty points and a fine, or be asked to take a 'Speed Awareness Course' (in which case you might escape the fine/points).**

4. Driving Lessons and Practicing Driving

If you are interested in learning to drive in the UK then you can take lessons. These usually cost around £25-40 per hour, and normally you would expect to need to take 45 hours of lessons to learn to drive. This may be less if you are already used to driving a car in Ukraine.

Once you have learned the basics and have confidence you can practise driving with family or friends. Anyone you practice your driving with (without paying them) must:

- Be over 21 (some insurance companies insist on them being over 25)
- Be qualified to drive the type of vehicle you want to learn in, for example they must have a manual car licence if they're supervising you in a manual car
- Have had their full driving licence for 3 years (from the UK, the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein)

You can be fined up to £1,000 and get up to 6 penalty points on your provisional licence if you drive without the right supervision. It is illegal for your friend or family member to use a mobile phone while supervising you or for you to drive on the motorway when practicing with family or friends.

Herefordshire Community Network

Support for Ukraine – information for guests

5. Insurance

UK Insurance is different from Ukrainian Insurance: You may be surprised to discover that car insurance in the UK is different to in Ukraine. The main difference is that the driver is insured to drive a specific car, rather than the car having been insured for anybody to drive. This means you cannot simply drive anybody else's car without considering insurance.

It might be useful to know:

- Your experience as a driver will have a big impact on the cost of insurance, if you have proof of having driven in Ukraine safely from your insurance company there, it might be worth getting evidence to share with your new UK insurer.
- The more expensive and/or powerful a car you choose to drive, the higher your insurance.
- Other factors such as where you live and where your car will be parked overnight/during the day can have an impact on insurance cost.
- Getting insurance as a learner driver will be more expensive than when you've passed your test.
- There are two main types of insurance in the UK, comprehensive and third party. If an accident is your fault, then comprehensive covers the repair/replacement costs for both cars, whereas third party covers only the other persons car.

Getting insurance when you have a licence: If you have a licence, whether some time ago in Ukraine or whether you have just passed in the UK, you will need to arrange insurance for the car you want to drive.

- If it is your own car you will need to find insurance for yourself. You can compare insurance deals on comparison websites such as [Confused.com](https://www.confused.com) or [Compare the Market](https://www.comparethemarket.com), once you have put your details into the site, along with the car you wish to drive, these will give you a list of prices from different companies. Admiral and NFU have been recommended by Ukrainians who have sought insurance.
- If you will be driving somebody else's car then you will need them to add you to their insurance or arrange for yourself to have insurance to drive it. Discuss this with the owner.

Insurance when you are learning:

- Driving instructors will have their own insurance, you will not need any to drive their cars.
- If you are practicing in your own car with a friend or family member present, you will need to have your own insurance as a learner driver.
- If you're practicing in someone else's car, you need to either:
 - Make sure you're covered by the car owner's insurance policy as an additional learner driver
 - OR take out your own insurance policy that covers you driving in their car as a learner driver

You can get an unlimited fine, be banned from driving and get up to 8 penalty points for driving without insurance.

Herefordshire Community Network

Support for Ukraine – information for guests

6. Bringing a car from Ukraine

It is possible to bring a car from the Ukraine to the UK, however, there are some things you will need to do to make this possible. This is the short summary; you can find the longer version here. If you wish to bring your car to the UK then you should consider the following:

- **Insurance:** It is important to make sure that your [Ukrainian insurance](#) policy covers you to drive in the UK.
- **Legal Matters**
 - **Import Duties:** If you are keeping your car in the UK for longer than six months, then you will need to apply for it to be exempt from paying import duties. [Read more about this here.](#)
 - **Registering and Road Tax:** If you have been issued a visa under one of the Ukraine visa schemes then you will NOT need to register or tax if your car if it is registered in Ukraine. You must maintain insurance in Ukraine which allows you to drive your car in the UK.
- **Car Safety**
 - **Pre-MOT Test:** On arrival in the UK it is encouraged to give your car a [pre-MOT test health check completed](#) to make sure there are no significant barriers to it staying long term.
 - **MOT Testing:** If your vehicle is more than three years old then it will need a [Ministry of Transport Test](#), this is an annual check to make sure it is working properly and has no work that needs completing on it. It is advisable to complete this every year whilst your car is in the UK to make sure it is safe. Check that a garage will undertake it on a non-UK car when booking it in, some garages should be able to do it based on your cars VIN (Vehicle Identity Number) rather than on your registration.
 - **Adjusting Your Headlights:** As we drive on a different side of the road in the UK, you will need to adjust your headlights for driving on the left. This can be done with “beam benders”, [read more about it here.](#)
 - **Reprogramming your speedometer:** If it is possible (if you have a digital speedometer) then reprogramming it from kph to mph will make following speed limits much simpler.
 - **Children’s Seats:** Please note that there are stringent regulations about children’s car seats, [you can read more here.](#)
- **Staying Longer:** If you stay in the UK longer than the four and a half years currently covered by the VISA scheme then you will need to tax and register your vehicle in the UK, and receive UK licence plates.

7. Losing Your Vehicle

If the police believe that you are using your vehicle in a way that causes alarm, harassment or distress, for example careless or inconsiderate driving, they can seize your vehicle. They can also seize your vehicle if they think it’s being driven by someone who does not have a proper licence or insurance.

Herefordshire Community Network

Support for Ukraine – information for guests

8. Buying and Owning A UK Car

To buy a car in the UK you need to follow these steps:

Before starting, consider if you can afford it. Owning a car in the UK can be expensive and might be a luxury you don't necessarily need, the average cost of running a car in the UK is £250-300 per month. Consider if it is your priority. If you are concerned about your finances, then talk to someone about it to get advice before proceeding.

If you are going ahead, first, find a vehicle – [Autotrader](#) is a good reliable place to look for a car, and often gives you an ideas as to whether a car is reasonably priced. Be careful with Facebook Marketplace and Ebay as these do not automatically check a cars eligibility to be sold.

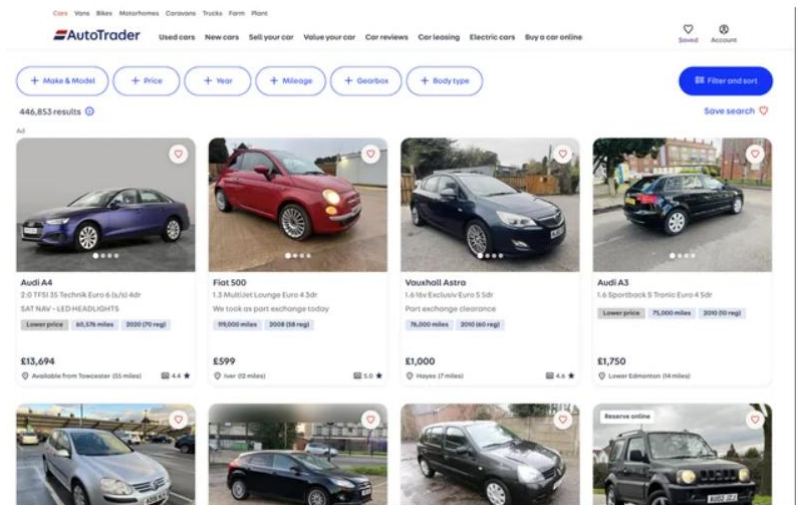
Also note:

- A car which is advertised as [Category S](#) or [Category N](#) has been in an accident and has been repaired. This may be ok but may mean the car costs more to insure.
- Consider whether you'll be able to afford to run and insure the car. Fuel, tax and insurance for bigger and more powerful cars might be significantly more expensive. Consider getting an insurance quote for the vehicle you want to purchase to see if you can afford it, getting a quote is free of charge.

Once you've found a vehicle you might want to purchase it can be worth checking a car using a car checker such as Total Car Check which will tell you how well a car has been looked after, whether it has outstanding loans, whether it has had its mileage changed or whether it has been in an accident. These cost £1.99 and give peace of mind.

Secondly, go and see the vehicle. If you do not know anything about cars then it is a good idea to take someone with you who does. If possible, drive the car, or at least let yourself be drive in it to make sure that it runs ok and has no problems. If something does not feel right or if you are not sure, then do not go ahead.

Every car has a V5C/2 form, its ownership document (photo to the right). The address on this should match that of the seller, if it does not then do not go ahead.



Support for Ukraine – information for guests

- **Paying for the vehicle.** Usually, an individual selling a car will want you to transfer the whole cost by bank transfer, make sure you are happy that you feel safe with the seller before you transfer money. A garage will let you pay on card or will arrange a loan (finance) if necessary.
- **Complete the ownership documentation:** Once you have completed the sale and have the keys, go back to the V5C/2 with the current owner. You will need to enter your details into the correct section and retain the slip of paper which proves you are the new owner.

6 New keeper slip – must be given to the new keeper

VSC-0119

This document is valid for 4 years from the date of issue.

This document must contain the vehicle's details based on the information you give it. It should be shown to all other agencies about the vehicle to enhance, reduce, or change the vehicle's Off Road Registration (ORR) number.

The vehicle's complete history will be given to the vehicle's new owner. The ORR will stay the same.

Each document is valid for 4 years from the date of issue.

You can get a new document if you have a document that is not valid.

When you get a new document, you must give it to the new keeper.

You must give the new keeper a document that is valid for 4 years from the date of issue.

You must give the new keeper a document that is valid for 4 years from the date of issue.

You must give the new keeper a document that is valid for 4 years from the date of issue.

- Some garages will give you free car insurance for 7 days when you purchase the car, this can give you time to sort your own insurance out and make it legal to drive the car home.

- ## 9. Selling a car

Selling a car is essentially the reverse process of purchasing one. Selling a car on Autotrader does cost money, but your contact details are protected and it is usually worth it for the service. Remember to cancel your insurance (or transfer it to a new car) when you sell it, and to cancel your road tax to get some of that money back.