

# GREATER **LONDON** AUTHORITY

## REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2571

### Title: **Ukraine Immigration Advice**

#### **Executive Summary:**

The Social Integration team is seeking approval to spend £50,000 to grant fund an organisation providing specialist immigration advice to Londoners and their families seeking to access the Ukraine Family Scheme and other routes to sanctuary in the UK.

#### **Decision:**

That the Assistant Director, Communities & Social Policy approves expenditure of £50,000 in 2022-2023 to grant fund Here for Good's Ukraine Immigration Advice project.

#### **AUTHORISING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/HEAD OF UNIT**

I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

It has my approval.

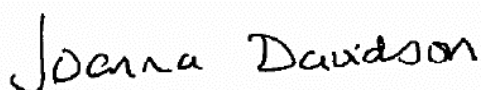
#### **Name:**

Joanna Davidson (for Tom Rahilly)

#### **Position:**

Executive Director, Communities and Skills

#### **Signature:**



#### **Date:**

25 March 2022

## **PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE**

### **Decision required – supporting report**

#### **1. Introduction and background**

- 1.1. This decision form seeks approval for expenditure of £50,000 to grant fund an organisation providing specialist immigration advice to Londoners and their families seeking to access the Ukraine Family Scheme and other routes to sanctuary in the UK. This builds on longstanding investment in the capacity of the immigration advice sector (ref. MD2973). Projects funded through MD2973 include the Justice Together Initiative and the Frontline Immigration Advice Programme which support the long-term capacity of the immigration advice sector. The funding will be provided as a grant to Here for Good to assist with visa applications under the Ukraine Family Scheme and the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, and provide advice to those who do not meet the requirements of the schemes. This includes both one off advice and assistance with full applications where the individual/family is not able to complete the application themselves. This work aims to improve the promotion and accessibility of the scheme and enable as many Londoners as possible to reunite with family to seek sanctuary together, and to support the success of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.
- 1.2. The Ukraine 'Family Scheme' enables a British national, someone settled in the UK, EU nationals and people with refugee status or enjoying humanitarian protection in the UK to bring here a Ukrainian national who is an immediate family member or an extended family member. Ukrainians finding sanctuary in the UK under the scheme will be granted three years leave to remain, with entitlement to work, and access to benefits and public services. Immigration specialists have been concerned that the visa requirements on the scheme require specialist advice and support especially for those with fewer resources and additional vulnerabilities.
- 1.3. Research on the capacity of the immigration advice sector in London supported by the GLA shows that the immigration advice sector in London is already beyond capacity and has been struggling to meet the needs of vulnerable migrants respond to the increased demand generated by the EU settlement scheme. The GLA engagement around the Ukraine Family Scheme with the relevant UK humanitarian organisations indicates that fulfilling the bureaucracy requirements of the scheme will pose the most significant challenges to the most vulnerable (e.g. poorer and least educated) Ukrainians living in the UK. In the absence of accessible, qualified immigration advice community groups have expressed concern that vulnerable people will turn to unqualified, unregulated advice and being exploited.
- 1.4. Data on the Ukrainian population living in the UK from the 2021 Census has been released early by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). This indicates that London might become a hotspot for the take up of the Ukraine Family Scheme. This data estimates that there are 37,570 Ukrainians living in England and Wales, with 18,990 living in London. However, the Ukrainian population in the UK is likely to be much larger and include undocumented Ukrainian nationals and Ukrainians on temporary visas poorly captured by the Census. Many rural and agricultural workers applying for the Ukraine Family Scheme are expected to move to urban locations to ensure that family members joining them have access to services - e.g. school places for their children.

#### **2. Objectives and expected outcomes**

- 2.1. The Here for Good Ukraine Project will provide funding to Here for Good, an organisation providing immigration advice to migrants and asylum seekers, to directly increase their frontline services supporting Ukrainian nationals seeking refuge in the UK. These are provided through phone advice and 1-2-1 casework support, which people can access by filling in a form on Here for Good's website. Services are provided by solicitors based at Wilson Solicitors, with whom they have a service agreement on a not-for-profit basis to deliver qualified immigration advice.
- 2.2. While the exact duration and scale of the programme remains flexible to respond to sudden surges in requests of support, Here for Good commits to use the funding for creating the equivalent of a 1.2 FTE immigration lawyer position for a minimum of five months. This estimate is based on the total resources available after the GLA funding decision, which will match the funding raised by an independent fundraising campaign by Here for Good. The joint funding will cover activities such as:
- Worktime of a junior case worker, who will be tasked with the groundwork for progressing all case work, coordination efforts and the more straightforward cases.
  - Worktime of an experienced solicitor for more complex work and for strategic support for other cases.
  - Worktime of a legal Partner at Wilson Solicitors overseeing and supervising all work, supporting the most complex cases and driving any litigations arising.
- 2.3. The grant funding will be made in accordance with the GLA Contracts and Funding Code.

#### Impacts and deliverables

- 2.4. This fund will work to rapidly increase the availability of immigration advice for Ukrainian nationals and other eligible individuals in London and help support efforts to resettle their families here. In line with the distribution of the of the Ukrainian population in the UK – approximately half of which is currently in London - the GLA will be matching the funds raised by a campaign led by Here for Good.
- 2.5. This fund will help expand the uptake of the scheme to help ensure the Ukraine Family Scheme meets its humanitarian protection objectives and remove barriers for more vulnerable applicants that require additional support in order to access the visa routes.

### **3. Equality comments**

- 3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as a public authority, the GLA must have 'due regard' of the Public Sector Equality Duty; that is, the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
  - advance equality of opportunity
  - foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- 3.2. The Social Integration work programme explicitly contributes to the Mayor’s equality objective to “work with others to address the inequalities and barriers that limit some Londoners’ ability to build strong relationships and be active citizens”<sup>1</sup>.
- 3.3. The fund will enable people to seek advice on how to regularise their immigration status in the UK or seek safe routes to sanctuary so that they can be reunited with family in the UK. Having secure immigration status and a place of safety are key drivers of equality to enable people to participate as equals in their communities.

#### 4. Other considerations

##### 4.1. Key risks and issues:

Risk	Mitigation action	Risk Rating – RAG:
Here for Good is not able to deliver the advice needed at pace because of a sudden surge in demand putting excessive strain on the solicitors allocated to the project.	The delivery of the project is through a well-established legal firm (Wilson Solicitors) with good connections in the immigration advice sector. This will allow them to distribute excess case work to trusted partners while remaining within the scope of the project.	Amber

##### Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.2 This work links to the Mayor’s Strategy for Social Integration *All of Us*, including confronting barriers and discrimination faced by migrants and refugees and supporting Londoners with insecure immigration status to access their legal rights to citizenship and residence.

##### Conflict of interest

- 4.3 There are no conflicts of interest to note for any of the officers involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision form.

#### 5. Financial comments

- 5.1 This decision seeks approval to spend £50,000 to grant fund Here for Good to provide specialist immigration advice to Londoners already resident in the UK and their families / sponsored guests arriving from Ukraine seeking to access the Ukraine Family Scheme, Homes for Ukraine and other routes to sanctuary in the UK.

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<sup>1</sup> Objective 35 of the Mayor’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy  
<https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/mayors-equality-diversity-inclusion-strategy.pdf>

5.2 The funding for the expenditure is coming from corporate contingency.

## **6. Planned delivery approach and next steps**

6.1. The activity and delivery of this fund will be planned by Here for Good. Here for Good will administer the fund on behalf of the GLA; this will involve administering the criteria for applications; advertising the fund; receiving and assessing applications; and handling the money.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Sign grant agreement	March 2022
Advice live	March 2022 – September 2022
End of project monitoring	October 2022

### **Appendices and supporting papers:**

None

**Public access to information**

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) and will be made available on the GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary. **Note:** This form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

**Part 1 - Deferral****Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? YES**

If YES, for what reason: To allow for a public announcement to be made

Until what date: 28 March 2022

**Part 2 – Sensitive information**

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under FoIA should be included in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

**Is there a part 2 form – NO****ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:**

Drafting officer to  
confirm the  
following (✓)

**Drafting officer:**

Hannah Boylan has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

**Corporate Investment Board**

This decision was agreed outside the usual cycle as a matter of urgency and a summary was reported to the Corporate Investment Board on 28 March 2022

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL SERVICES:**

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

**Signature**



**Date**

**25/3/22**