

CPD4124282

**English for Speakers of Other Languages and Employment Support -
Pre-Tender Market Engagement
PTME FAQs version 2**

General Information

Q: ESOL is the greatest barrier to Ukrainians being able to take up work. What is being done to improve English language provision for Ukrainians?

A: In an extension of the support for Ukrainians who have fled Putin's illegal war and arrived in the UK under the three humanitarian Ukraine visa schemes, the government announced £11.5 million in the Spring Budget 2023 to fund intensive English language courses and employment support for up to 10,000 eligible individuals. This new funding is expected to boost the number of Ukrainians entering the labour market for the first time, as well as helping those already employed into higher-skilled roles and support their integration into society.

We are therefore now seeking to enhance existing English learning provision and employment support by potentially awarding a contract (through an open competitive process) to a provider (or consortium with a lead provider). This will be to achieve the government's aim of increasing numbers of Ukrainians entering employment in the UK for the first time as well as helping those already in employment into a higher-skilled job through intensive and flexible English language training and tailored wrap around employment support. This will also enable Ukrainians to become more self-sufficient - a critical enabler to them accessing the private rented sector in a sustainable way and moving out of sponsorship.

Q: Why is this targeted at Ukrainians? Where/for whom will this support be available?

A: ESOL is widely available to all cohorts either under the Adult Education Budget or through bespoke funding for ESOL support, and employment support is available through the 'Find a job' service and Job Centres. We consider that the Ukrainian cohort requires more intensive, immediate support than other cohorts given that they have time-limited three-year visas for the UK and will need to live independently during that time.

This support will be available to Ukrainians who are in the UK on one of the three humanitarian visa schemes. The support is planned to be available primarily through online delivery but with some face-to-face employment support.

Q: Homelessness is rising among the Ukrainian cohort. Why aren't you doing more to support Ukrainians into work and housing?

A: We are encouraging Ukrainians to make use of job centres and we have set up a [dedicated gov.uk webpage for employers to offer work to Ukrainians](#). We have worked with the UK National Information Centre to produce clearer guidance on how to have qualifications translated and recognised by employers, and we are also working with the UK Centre for Professional Qualifications to clarify and promote the process for working in a professionally regulated role in the UK. Many councils are also providing additional support funded by the tariff they receive for this cohort. In December we announced £150m additional funding for councils to help support Ukrainian guests move into their own homes and reduce the risk of homelessness. Councils in England will also receive a new £500m fund to acquire housing stock for those fleeing conflict and to reduce homelessness.

Q: Latest ONS data show a rise in Ukrainians' English; doesn't this demonstrate that the current provisions are sufficient?

A: The ONS¹ statistics are based on a survey of 3,148 adults, who: participated in the second wave of the UK Humanitarian Response Insight Survey (conducted during June 2022), agreed to be recontacted, and also responded to this follow-up survey (conducted from 17 October to 7 November 2022). Compared to the arrival numbers, this is a small sample, and we must exercise some caution in assuming that this pool precisely mirrors the whole of the cohort. In addition, the ONS survey questions related to ESOL are self-assessed rather than based on finalising courses and receiving grades/certifications. The data still shows that 43% of the Ukrainians do not have sufficient English with 9% speaking little to no English.

Q: According to the latest ONS survey, 65% of Ukrainians are not working in the same sector as they did in Ukraine. What else is the Department doing to break down barriers?

A: We are encouraging the use of job centres and directing Ukrainians with work-related qualifications to the UK National Information Centre for the recognition and evaluation of international qualifications and skills, who can help make sure that their certificates attained in Ukraine are converted to a UK equivalent.

Q: Compared to other cohorts Ukrainians' visas run out after 3 years. Why would we invest in dedicated ESOL provision?

A: Three years is a long time, and some Ukrainians will be starting their three-year journey now. Ukrainians who are in private accommodation and earning above Universal Credit thresholds will incur significantly reduced costs and unlocking employment at levels commensurate with skills and experience, particularly amongst professionals, will make a marked difference. English language skills are the most significant barrier to achieving this level of employment.

Q: Will this scheme be to the detriment of local authorities' own programmes?

A: This is in addition to and to complement what local authorities are doing and help alleviate the pressures local authorities are experiencing.

1

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/bulletins/visaholdersenteringtheukundertheukrainehumanitarianschemes/17octoberto7november2022>

Q: How will this scheme support with the pressures local authorities face with respect to the shortage of tutors?

A: The government has allocated £1m to Strategic Migrant Partnerships to use specifically to build capacity in this market. This will also support the delivery of this programme.

Q: How will this work for devolved areas? Especially where Low wage will be different?

A: We will set out further details on this in any future procurement process.

Q: Wouldn't it be more efficient to allocate the funds via the existing mechanism of Combined Authorities (and councils)?

A: This is an option we considered very carefully. Due to the lack of operational capacity some local authorities are facing, along with the desire to tailor a package for this cohort, it has been decided to centrally procure a tailored programme.

Programme Scope

Q: How many people do you expect to reach?

A: Up to 10,000 Ukrainians who are in the UK on the three Ukrainian visa schemes.

Q: Last cut off point for final participants?

A: This would be at the 10 week point before the programme ends.

Q: Are Ukrainians who are engaged in DWP restart scheme in scope?

A: This funding is expected to boost the number of Ukrainians entering the labour market for the first time, as well as helping those already employed into higher-skilled roles. Ukrainians who are participating in the DWP Restart Scheme are eligible for this programme as well.

Q: Are you able to clarify whether the expectation is that any eligible Ukrainian would only participate in one ten-week course of English learning? Could there be the possibility that someone would participate in a number of courses to be able to continue improvement?

A: The expectation is for the Provider to assess the individual's needs and design an individualised programme plan that will ensure the individual reaches the necessary level of English to enter a higher-skilled job. The Provider is expected to do this within the assigned funding.

Q: What employment support will be provided?

A: We plan to require that each participant receives one-to-one support to find and apply for suitable jobs, and prepare for work, including one-to-one support with CV

writing, job applications, interview preparation, and understanding the UK job market and types of jobs available.

Q: If an applicant was to go onto this course would they have to take both parts – both ESOL and employment support?

A: Yes. 56% of arrivals recently surveyed by the ONS², who have faced difficulty finding work, reported limited English language skills as an ongoing barrier to taking up work or moving into roles more suited to their skills and qualifications.

Q: Some people want the accredited version, but you have to do a certain number of hours. Some people want to study without fulfilling a number of hours. So, in order to be need based it needs to cater for the cohort? Is there a requirement for all the English language support to be accredited, with a qualification?

A: Our expectation is that students should be able to study for up to 20 hours a week. We could consider a non-accredited version as part of the pre-market engagement to understand the scale of the issue. We would welcome views on both.

Those that are not able to do this will be referred to the Adult Education Budget offers or alternative provisions. This funding is for Ukrainians who are struggling to access the labour market for the first time, as well as helping those already employed into higher-skilled roles

Q: We have found that a number of participants that we work with are assessed at pre-entry ESOL which is not accredited, how will this programme support participants assessed at this level?

A: Providers will need to assess all students individually. The first objective is to assess learners' initial English Language skills and identify their barriers to entering the employment market, or into higher skilled roles and develop their tailored support plan.

Q: Do both elements need to be delivered at the same time (ESOL and employment support)?

A: Whilst we expect the Potential Provider to deliver both integrated services simultaneously, the degree to which each participant needs to participate in both parts will depend on the support the participant needs in accessing the labour market. We would welcome feedback on how this will work in practice.

Q: Have DLUHC considered how the online aspect of this (such as access to libraries) will work?

A: The Provider will need to ensure the training they provide is fully accessible to all. They should state in their bid how they will support those students who do not have

2

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/bulletins/visaholdersenteringtheukundertheukrainehumanitarianschemes/17octoberto7november2022>

access to laptops/internet that will enable them to stay online for up to 20 hours a week. We would welcome views on how this could be delivered.

Q: What is the definition of suitable work. Will suppliers be responsible for tracking this?

A: This funding is to increase access to suitable English language training and employment support for Ukrainians in entering employment, as well as helping those already in low paid employment, into higher skilled jobs. Suppliers will need to track this as it is proposed that the final 10% of the funding will be released upon success of the programme (approximately 12 months after completion of contract).

Q: What is the expectation on Providers in terms of staff given that there's a national shortage of ESOL teachers?

A: Potential Providers (or leaders of a consortium) will be expected to have suitable staff resources to deliver the project within the allocated fund and timeframe.

Q: Will the programme be evaluated independently?

A: Owing to time constraints, the programme will not be evaluated independently. However, the Provider will be required to provide regular monitoring data as agreed between the Department and the Provider, to monitor the implementation of the programme. The provider will also support an internal evaluation of the scheme (by collecting and providing data on outcomes, employment prospects, language proficiency, etc). Full details will be provided within the specification.

Procurement process

Q: Are you able to facilitate consortium approach by sharing contact details of those interested?

A: When we proceed with the procurement process, we can share your details with any other organisations who may be interested in receiving them/contacting you. DLUHC would not take part in any of those discussions. Please contact: commercialtenders@levellingup.gov.uk for further information.

Q: Why do procurement nationally rather than regionally? Many of the organisations have regional expertise. Local councils and Agencies are already working successfully with their allocated cohorts and providing individually tailored solutions that match the local demand for employability skills. Mental health support etc, is needed but is funded by other organisations and funding streams – the ability to refer to other provisions is done better locally.

A: While many adults who have arrived through these three schemes are now employed in the UK, 56% of arrivals recently surveyed, who have faced difficulty in finding work, reported limited English language skills as an ongoing barrier to taking up better paid or moving into roles more suited to their skills and qualifications. This is why a national programme is being established.

Q: If you only want one provider are they expected to have full national coverage which may mean a very big consortium of regional partners? Is the assumption that one provider will be delivering both the ESOL and the Employment Support or can these be delivered by separate providers? Is the one provider set in stone or could all of the feedback influence that changing?

A: The Department is seeking a single Potential Provider or a leader of a consortium to deliver this contract.

Q: How will the payments be made and on what basis over the contract period? Could you provide further information on potential outcome payment triggers/KPIs?

A: We appreciate we will likely need to frontload the funding, but we will be looking at this in more detail. We anticipate the payment structure will be an initial 40%, then drawdown of 50% subject to successful delivery and the final 10% released upon success of the programme to ensure the project is delivered. We are still actively considering this however it will likely be dependent on the number of individuals achieving a particular level of ESOL accreditation and on entry to employment, for example, using the CEFR Scale, achieving B1 within 3 months

Q: What's the mobilisation period?

A: Our indicative timeline has the mobilisation period starting week commencing 19 June.

Q: Will this exercise be reconsidered considering the questions raised during the PTME?

A: Yes, the purpose of this exercise as well as the PTME workshop was to get an understanding of the deliverability and feasibility of the project