

**Specification for the provision of
the
1:1 Language Support Service for
Refugees in Lancashire**

1. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SERVICE

- 1.1 To provide a 1:1 Language Support Service (the **Service**) available to all refugees aged 18 years or over who live in the following Local Authority areas in Lancashire: Blackpool, Burnley, Chorley, Fylde, Hyndburn, Lancaster, Pendle, Preston, Rossendale, South Ribble, West Lancashire, and Wyre. Priority for language buddying support will be given to adult refugees who have been resettled under the Lancashire Refugee Resettlement Programme (which includes the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme and the UK Resettlement Scheme), particularly those facing significant barriers to learning English (see 5.1 for more details).
- 1.2 To promote the learning of the English language, particularly among those who have been resettled through the Lancashire Refugee Resettlement Programme.
- 1.3 To support resettled families to overcome language barriers and reduce their dependence and demand on mainstream public services and/or refugee resettlement services (e.g. interpreting).
- 1.4 To help develop sustainable relationships between refugees and members of the wider community by increasing refugees' access to, and participation in, local English-speaking networks, activities and voluntary organisations, thus fostering a sense of belonging.
- 1.5 To increase awareness of refugee issues in local communities, including the experiences and cultures of refugees, the challenges of learning a new language as an adult and the barriers these learners face.

2. SCOPE OF THE SERVICE

- 2.1 The Lancashire Refugee Resettlement Programme (the **Programme**) has resettled 120 refugee families, most of whom are from Syria. The Programme supports the resettled refugee families in various ways, including the provision of casework support to help the families settle in their new communities and access mainstream services. It also provides formal ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes and interpreting and translation support to some of our delivery partners, among other services.
- 2.2 Refugee resettlement programmes work with some of the most vulnerable refugees, selected on the basis of a number of vulnerability criteria, including people with medical conditions and disabilities, survivors of torture and/or violence, women or girls at risk, and children or adolescents at risk. Despite the support available to resettled refugee families, poor English language skills often remain a major barrier to integration. Even if refugees are enrolled in ESOL provision, they are not always able to find the time, space, opportunity or motivation to practise and apply what they are learning outside the classroom. Moreover, formal, classroom-based learning does not meet the needs of all refugees, especially those with limited education and literacy in their own language.
- 2.3 The 1:1 Language Support Service will establish relationships between Volunteers and refugees (Clients) which are initiated, supported and monitored by a voluntary or statutory agency. 1:1 Language Support provides a unique opportunity for refugees to develop their English language skills and overcome barriers to learning English. Volunteers providing 1:1 Language Support facilitate opportunities for refugees to practise their English, as well as to develop their capacity for self-study by accessing resources and developing study skills that will facilitate their progress in English both inside and outside the classroom. Through 1:1 language support, refugees will gain an understanding of their own learning styles and will take ownership of their learning through self-study strategies. The individualised approach enables the Client to receive targeted support tailored to their specific needs. The Service will also help to create social connections and meaningful relationships between refugees and local communities.
- 2.4 The Service must complement other Programme services and those offered by external providers. To avoid duplication, Service staff must be fully briefed about the Programme,

including any existing casework support that clients are accessing from other providers and the scope of that provision. If the client is already accessing mainstream formal or informal ESOL classes, the Service will ensure that Volunteers are aware of what is being provided and how to best complement that provision. The information and methods that are required for the Service to operate in harmony with other Programme services shall be included in the volunteer training and in the resource packs or handbooks for both volunteers and clients.

- 2.5 The Service must create structured language support relationships between refugee clients and volunteers. These relationships must be time-limited (see 4.7). They must take place on an individual basis, even if other members of the Client's household are also seeking language support. Language support differs from friendship in that the latter is a private, mutual relationship while language support is a service. Language support specifically involves elements of language teaching, mentoring, coaching and befriending. The Volunteer must work collaboratively with the Client to motivate, encourage and support them to improve their English language skills. Each relationship in the Service must be developed on the basis of general language support principles, the aims of the Service, and the specific needs, assets and characteristics of particular Volunteers and Clients.
- 2.6 The support model to be used in the Service must involve regular sessions between the Volunteer and the Client. These can be either online (remote) or face-to-face, according to the preference of the Client. These sessions must form the basis of the activities provided by the Service. The provider will adapt the delivery of the project according to changing Covid-19 restrictions, including providing any necessary ICT support for both Volunteers and Clients should face-to-face work become impossible. Volunteers recruited by the Service must not be paid for their language support role. The Service must be offered free of charge to refugee clients.

3. AGREED VALUES ON WHICH THE SERVICE IS BASED

- 3.1 LCC and the Provider agree that the values on which the Service must be based on are consistent with local and national legal, policy and guidance, and recommendations of national research and investigations, including:
- Equality Act 2010
 - Integrated Communities Strategy green paper, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, March 2018
 - Refugees Welcome? The experience of new refugees in the UK, a report by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees, April 2017
 - Civil Society Strategy: building a future that works for everyone, Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, August 2018
 - Public Services (Social Value) Act, 31 January 2013
 - Procurement Policy Note 06/20 – taking account of social value in the awarding of central government contracts

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICE

- 4.1 This section details all the elements that the Service must contain, as a minimum. These are basic requirements for the Service.
- 4.2 The Provider must set up a recruitment system for 1:1 Language Support Volunteers. This system must include, as a minimum:
- An engagement and marketing plan to advertise the opportunities in the relevant communities where refugees live, including group briefings.
 - Targeted recruitment of 1:1 Language Support Volunteers to match certain characteristics of refugee clients (or of their families).
 - Mechanisms for ensuring that people from different backgrounds apply for places.
 - Effective assessment tools in order to recruit the best possible pool of Volunteers, e.g. face to face interviews, tests, references.
 - Comprehensive training and/or induction of selected Volunteers that covers the following topics:

- Understanding the refugee resettlement scheme(s) and the asylum system in the UK
 - Cultural competence and integration
 - Language teaching approaches, including literacy support
 - Effective 1:1 work, including empowering coaching and mentoring approaches
 - Safeguarding and working with vulnerable adults
- Volunteers must have a background in language teaching, tutoring, mentoring or coaching. Volunteers must have strong communication skills and display compassion, empathy, patience and flexibility. Volunteers must also have some existing understanding of the importance of empowering relationships and strategies to motivate language learners one-to-one to improve their English.
 - Volunteers must be 18 years old or over and live in a location that will enable face-to-face work with clients whenever this is possible. The provider will reimburse travel expenses of both the Volunteer and the Client to cover the cost of transport to/from face-to-face meetings.
- 4.3 The Provider must set up a recruitment and referral system for refugee clients. This system must include, as a minimum:
- Information for refugees about the Service and how to be referred, available in refugees' languages
 - An engagement plan in order to raise awareness of the Service among, and build relationships with, service providers that may refer potential clients
 - Referral systems, including referral forms, available in English and refugees' languages
 - Protocols and practices to ensure that all groups are adequately represented in the client population, particularly women, younger people, older people, people with disabilities and/or medical conditions, people from all geographical areas covered by the Service, and so on.
 - Effective assessment tools to ensure that recruited clients meet the eligibility and vulnerability criteria (see 5.1).
 - Comprehensive induction and briefing of clients, training on boundaries and lone working, using machine translation and the role of the Volunteer.
- 4.4 The Provider must devise tools that ensure high retention rates for Volunteers and Clients, e.g. Service information updates, continuous learning and training opportunities, and group events.
- 4.5 The Provider must produce a Volunteer handbook or resource pack and a Client handbook or resource pack, which must contain relevant information about the Service and systems for recording outcomes and other information from the Language Support relationship.
- 4.6 The Provider must develop and implement detailed records of Volunteers and Clients, and an effective matching protocol, whereby clients are matched with the most appropriate Volunteer. Information will be stored and recorded according to GDPR guidelines. This protocol must take into consideration the personal characteristics and histories of both parties (e.g. age, professional background, hobbies and interests), and the potential benefits of the relationship to both. Once a match is suggested, the Provider must arrange a first meeting in a neutral venue between the Volunteer, the client, and the Provider. It is expected that the Provider will book an interpreter for the initial meeting if this is required. If necessary, before a decision is taken as whether to proceed with this intervention, other initial meetings may be organised.
- 4.7 The 1:1 Language Support relationships must meet the following minimum requirements:
- Volunteers must have an enhanced DBS certificate prior to starting a Language Support relationship.
 - Both parties in the relationship must have an understanding of boundaries and must hold all meetings in public places such as libraries, parks or cafes; no meetings will take place in the homes of either the Volunteer or the Client. Alternatively, sessions can take place online if convenient to the Client.
 - Each relationship must follow a phased or scaffolded structure, with the amount of contact time between Volunteers and Clients gradually decreasing over the course of

the relationship as the Client spends more time on self-study and independent language practice.

- Each relationship must aim for Clients to become self-sufficient learners who know where and how to access language support and learning resources. As well as traditional tutoring, sessions will include exploring and accessing learning resources as well as practical applications of language learning, such as outings to the library or the post office. (The general outcomes for every Client are listed in 6.3)
- More specific, time-limited individual outcomes must be identified in a bespoke Language Support Plan (available in all relevant languages) which allows for the recording of feedback to the Provider. The Provider will organise a review of the Language Support Plan together with the client and the volunteer, at least once every three months.
- Each relationship must comprise a minimum of two hours of contact time a week in the first three months – either face-to-face or online - between Volunteer and Client. Face-to-face sessions must take place in a suitable, safe and accessible location. Online sessions must be easily accessible for both parties. If possible, face-to-face interactions must be prioritised, especially early on in the relationship, and if the Client faces barriers to accessing digital resources.
- After three months, the weekly contact time between the Language Buddy and the client must be reduced gradually, with an absolute minimum of one-hour contact time a week by the final month.
- Each relationship must last initially for six months, with the possibility of extension by up to another six months, subject to a formal review based on the Language Support Plan.
- A system must be established for the regular (e.g. weekly, fortnightly) monitoring and supervision of the Language Support relationship, including sharing of information about meetings (e.g. dates and locations), activities, milestones, etc.
- A system must be established that allows both Volunteers and Clients to report complaints and sensitive issues to the Provider, e.g. safeguarding issues.
- The Provider must endeavour to avoid pairing the same Volunteer with more than one Client. In some cases, however, doing so may be the best way to achieve the aims of the Service. In any case, no more than 20% of recruited Volunteers may be paired with more than one client, and in no case will any Volunteer be paired with more than two.
- In addition to 1:1 language support sessions, the Provider must also facilitate a Volunteer peer support group and a Client peer support group. These networks will provide opportunities for volunteers and clients to share their experiences and learn from one another. Volunteers and Clients must be allocated a peer support group based on relevant criteria, for example local area, level of English (Client), level of experience (Volunteer), length of time in relationship. Each peer support group must consist of between five and ten individuals. Where relevant, Volunteers can support Clients to prepare for these sessions, for example by supporting them to develop presentation skills or a study diary to easily share with other Clients at peer networking events. Such events must take place on a quarterly basis, with each Volunteer and each Client participating in a minimum of two events (for instance, after three months and then after six months of language support).

4.8 The Provider must inform LCC of any safeguarding issues that it comes across in the Service. It must also report to LCC any breakdown of language support relationships, stating the reasons and how it intends to remedy any negative impacts of such breakdown.

4.10 The Provider must produce the following policies and protocols for the Service:

- Risk Management tool, to be reviewed on a quarterly basis
- Volunteer recruitment and retention policy and/or protocol
- An assessment tool for new Clients to establish their needs and prioritise effectively
- A Volunteer-Client matching protocol or tool
- Safeguarding policy
- Equality and community cohesion policy
- Data protection and confidentiality protocol (while having regard to the *Funding Instruction for Local Authorities in Support of the United Kingdom Resettlement Programmes*)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877261/2020-2021_LA_Funding_Instruction_v1.0_-_Final1.pdf

- Lone worker policy and/or protocol, to include both staff and Volunteers.
- A Legacy Plan, detailing the steps that the Provider must take in order to maximise the positive impacts of the Service beyond its lifespan.

4.11 The Provider's staffing structure and practice, to cover both paid staff and volunteers, must meet the following minimum requirements:

- All staff and volunteers must have an enhanced DBS certificate.
- A comprehensive and continuing training programme covering the core areas mentioned in 4.2, as well as other relevant topics that come up during the course of the Language Support relationships, for instance refugee mental health, supporting basic literacy learners, engaging with online learning platforms.

A workforce that is sufficient in size and skills to adequately provide the Service. Skills amongst staff members should include: expertise in engaging with vulnerable and diverse communities; understanding of barriers to learning among the refugee community; project coordination skills, including monitoring and evaluation; understanding of safeguarding procedures, including working online; volunteer coordination; management and training of staff or volunteers; administrative and record-keeping skills, including IT.

4.12 The Provider must keep accurate and appropriate records according to GDPR, which are sufficient to ensure delivery of the Service to meet this specification.

4.13 The Provider must ensure that the service aims are being met and are achieving the desired results. As a minimum, the Provider must conduct customer satisfaction surveys at the end of every 12 months in order to measure how the Service is meeting its aims.

4.14 The Provider will use their own offices as well as community venues to engage and welcome clients. The Provider must also use contact details designated for the Service, including at least one telephone number and one email address.

4.15 The Service's core operations, including staff availability, must happen during normal working hours, from Monday to Friday between 9:00 and 17:00. Meetings and activities in language support relationships may happen outside these hours. The Service will be closed on bank holidays.

4.16 The Provider must not make any public statement relating to the existence or performance of the Service without prior approval of LCC. Any public statement must include a statement that confirms the service is funded by LCC.

5. ELIGIBILITY FOR THE SERVICE AND REFERRAL SYSTEMS

5.1 Clients in the Service must be aged 18 years or over, reside within the LA areas listed in paragraph 1.1, and be refugees (or having been granted humanitarian protection). Priority will be given to refugees resettled under the UK Resettlement Scheme, the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme or the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme, and to refugees who are experiencing one more of the following:

:

- Barriers to accessing ESOL classes, for example childcare responsibilities, health issues, distance from appropriate classes
- Limited or no literacy in first language
- Limited experience of education in home country
- Diagnosed or suspected special educational needs or learning diversity
- Social isolation and exclusion from English-speaking communities
- Specific learning goals not catered for in accessible ESOL provision, e.g. IELTS preparation
- Any other relevant vulnerability

5.2 If the capacity of the Service exceeds demand within the communities of resettled refugees in Lancashire, the Service must prioritise refugees who were recently granted refugee status or humanitarian protection and decide to settle in Lancashire. Any additional capacity may then be used to benefit more established refugees. If there is still capacity after the service has been offered to those with refugee status, the provider will offer the service to asylum seekers.

5.3 Referrals of potential clients will be accepted, as a minimum, from:

- Public services such as Local Authorities (social services, housing, wellbeing services), NHS organisations, Job Centre Plus, Lancashire Constabulary, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service.
- Schools, nurseries, colleges, and universities.
- Third Sector organisations.
- Self-Referral.

The Provider must create effective referral and self-referral pathways and agreements with as many relevant organisations and services as possible, including full briefings about the Service to various stakeholders, including refugee communities.

5.4 The Provider must ensure that referrals or self-referrals of potential clients can be made, as a minimum, through the following ways:

- Online forms
- Email
- Post
- Face to face appointments (if possible and safe to do so)

5.5 The bespoke Referral forms used in the Service must include all the relevant information to allow the Provider to assess eligibility for the Service, levels of priority and types of vulnerability (as spelled out in paragraph 5.1), and must be available in all relevant languages.

5.6 Each referral must be individually assessed (a referral will not automatically result in a service being offered). Assessments must include contact with prospective clients. If possible, these should be conducted face-to-face. If not, they should take place either through telephone or video call, ensuring that the client has access to the necessary technology for this to happen successfully.

6. MONITORING CRITERIA AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

6.1 The Provider must submit to LCC Quarterly Reports, which must include, as a minimum, the following information (relative to the quarter being reported):

A. Overall (narrative) summary to include:

- a) Progress and activity to date, including engagement and marketing activity
- b) What has worked well (successes)
- c) What can be done differently (challenges)?
- d) Comments / complaints / compliments
- e) Planned developments and initiatives
- f) Information on the positive difference the service has made and the impact of individual language support relationships on English language development and general integration
- g) A small number of case studies

B. Quantitative information to include:

- a) Number of referrals, including a breakdown by type of organisation (e.g. Local Authority, police, Third Sector) and Local Authority area (see 1.1)
- b) Reasons for referrals (see 5.1, but the Provider may include others)
- c) Number of applicants for the Volunteer role

- d) Number of completed Client assessments / Volunteer interviews
- e) Number of people waiting to be assessed/interviewed
- f) Number and length of finished and ongoing relationships, including the total number of contact hours (face to face and otherwise)
- g) Breakdown of current Volunteers and Clients engaged in relationships by age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability or serious medical condition (in the family)
- h) Number of staff and volunteers working for the Service
- i) Number of peer support events, i.e. where Language Buddies and clients have met within peer groups to share ideas, learning and experiences
- j) Details of progress made within Individual Language Support Plan reviews, for instance percentage of Clients reporting improved confidence communicating in English.

6.2 The following Key Performance Indicators apply to the Service (these figures represent the minimum requirements, unless otherwise stated):

- Number of individual language buddying relationships:
 - Minimum 75 per year
- Number of contact hours between Volunteers and Clients (face-to-face or online)
 - A minimum of 36 hours per relationship
- Number of peer support events held (face-to-face or online) – total number of events will depend on number of volunteers and size of groups
 - Minimum of 2 events per Client peer support group
 - Minimum of 2 events per Volunteer peer support group
- Customer (client) satisfaction survey (to be completed either annually or at the end of the relationship)
 - 80% of customers reporting satisfaction with the service
- Maximum rate of relationship discontinuations (less than 6 months) – 10%
- Progress made in at least three of the five outcomes listed below

6.3 Desired outcomes for Clients, to be measured through the Language Support Plans:

- Increased confidence communicating in English
- Increased access to opportunities to use English in everyday life, especially in social settings
- Increased use of resources to support language learning, including digital resources
- Greater confidence to access services using English without reliance on an interpreter
- Improved understanding of own learning style, learning preferences and strategies to support language acquisition
- Progress towards individual language goals, as identified in the client Language Support Plan

7. CONTRACT LENGTH AND VALUE

The contract will commence in early 2022 and last initially for 12 months. The contract may be renewed for another 12 months, subject to fulfilling the KPIs listed in 6.2. If for any reason the provider cannot fulfil these KPIs, this must be communicated to the Authority as soon as possible and contingency plans made. The maximum value available under this specification will be £100,000 a year. The payment schedule will be quarterly in advance, subject to satisfactory quarterly monitoring reports being received by LCC.

8. LEGACY

The Provider will ensure that the Service leaves a legacy beyond the duration of the contract, e.g.:

- Plan fundraising activities in order to secure funding to continue delivering similar services in the future.
- Share information and training with local communities and refugees, so they can initiate similar services in the future.

- Publicise the Service and its successes in order to inspire others to work towards achieving the same aims as the Service.

DRAFT

DRAFT