



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Neil Gray MSP, Minister for Culture,
Europe and International
Development and Minister with
special responsibility for Refugees
from Ukraine

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(by email)

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Dear Minister

Humanitarian Support for Ukrainian Displaced Persons

Further to your evidence to the Committee on [16 June 2022](#), as well as our preceding session with the Consul General, we wish to further explore a number of issues with you.

Firstly, when it comes to terminology, we note the Consul General's correction of the term "refugee" in favour of "temporarily displaced Ukrainians"; also, the use by COSLA and others of "Ukrainian Displaced Persons" (UDPs). I'm sure the sensitivities around language are not lost on any of us.

The Consul General mentioned the Ukraine Extension Scheme in the context of seasonal workers, the plight of whom he had spoken about with us in a private briefing in March. He reported last week that he had not seen many instances of the scheme's use but was aware of a recent case whereby a family had been able to stay in the UK for three years, find new employment, and bring their children to Scotland. You later talked about this in terms of a "workaround", a means of allowing people to be sponsored by the Scottish Government and so join their families. The Committee would welcome further details of the extent to which the scheme is being used in this way.

In terms of areas where more support was needed, Mr Mankovskyi mentioned the importance of English classes for those Ukrainians who are not fluent in the language. He also suggested that it would be helpful to have interpreters present in the welcome hubs at airports and on high streets. We would welcome your thoughts on those points. He talked too about the need for support for nursery places for

parents with young children, and catchment areas and flexibility for school-age children and young people. You yourself talked about working with councils on nursery provision and the catchment point, encouraging them to “use their flexibility and discretion to the absolute maximum”. We would be grateful for any further reflection on both these aspects – nursery and school provision, particularly within the context of the current tight fiscal environment.

Regarding accommodation, the Consul General told us of up to 500 people staying in hotels for one month or more. He pointed out that while that might be sufficient for individuals, to be in safe place and with three meals a day, it was not ideal for families. You talked about the desire to find families more suitable longer-term accommodation as soon as possible, and about local flexibility with matching. Could you elaborate on your ongoing work with COSLA etc. to that end and what action can be taken to ensure that people are not left in hotels any longer than necessary; also reflecting more widely on what has been reported about some people from previous settlement schemes remaining in hotels over long periods of time? Our concern is that those in such situations may experience challenges in accessing health, mental health and education services. What monitoring is there of people – Ukrainian and of other nationalities – in what are intended to be temporary hotel stays?

In respect of co-ordinated services and providing clear information, Mr Mankovskyi suggested there could be links and contact details on relevant websites – e.g. Edinburgh airport’s – to local authorities, benefits-related information and welcome hubs. Again, we would like to hear your views.

Transport was another area highlighted by the Consul General and then raised with you last week. He wondered whether it would be possible to provide free travel for people between aged between 22 and 60 if they could show a Ukrainian passport, or else were able to apply for a bus or travel pass for one month, as has been the case in countries such as Poland and Germany. You referred to “fantastic work” in Stirling, Glasgow and Edinburgh, but also the need to do something on a national basis, and you gave a commitment to write to the committee with an update. We look forward to hearing more from you on the matter soon.

On the issue of funding for local authorities, you described “a question mark” over the UK Government £10,500 tariff and when that would be seen, if there was parity with previous settlement schemes, and whether it was enough for councils to provide the wraparound services required of them. You said you were examining what could be done to ensure that local government is properly supported to fulfil those obligations. The Committee would welcome updates from you as that situation develops.

Many of the issues raised with you during the meeting had also been highlighted by COSLA and Highland Council. I will underline just a couple of these points again below.

Highland Council, for example, sought clarity through the Scottish Super Sponsorship Scheme on what they saw as a lack of funding instructions for them to be able to plan ahead for the resettlement scheme. They also found the approach to

work, bank accounts, biometric cards and appointments to be a challenge, suggesting a lack of guidance was slowing down the process.

COSLA emphasised the number of people in hotel accommodation, a matter already outlined above, expressing concern at the pressures on services such as health and education as more applications are granted.

They also cited some examples of the challenges for the matching service, including:

- Medical – people with complex needs and a need to be close to health provision;
- Personal / community – people not comfortable moving to another part of Scotland
- Transport – councils without the transport capacity for all host matches

It may also be helpful in terms of context and further detail if I can draw your attention to the papers from last week's meeting, particularly the [summary of evidence](#) from our previous sessions, but also the written updates provided by:

- [Highland Council](#)
- [COSLA](#)
- [JustRight Scotland](#) and
- [Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership](#).

And I look forward to hearing from you on these various issues at the very earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely



Clare Adamson MSP, Convener of the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee