

Translation, Interpreting and Language Support



The UK's Ukraine Language Support Task Force

By now, over a million people have fled Ukraine. In the UK, the [Ukraine Family Scheme Visa](#) is open for applications for the family members of Ukrainians already settled in the country, with up to 200 000 refugees expected to apply.

But visa applications require certified translations of documents such as birth and marriage certificates. Many refugees not fluent in English rely on interpreting to communicate with UK authorities. Access to language support is a critical element in the UK's response to the escalating crisis.

A language support task force

UK-based translation, interpreting and language service associations and organisations have formed a language support task force to respond to the rapidly developing need for Ukrainian into English language support in the UK.

The task force consists of Charity Translators, the Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIOL), the Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI), the National Register for Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI), the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC UK & Ireland), and the Association of Translation Companies (ATC).

Templates for certified translations

The task force will produce a set of Ukrainian- English templates for the most commonly needed documents for visa applications: birth and marriage certificates.

The ATC's CEO Raisa McNab comments, "The pressing need for freely available templates for key documents was highlighted to us by our colleagues on the Polish-Ukrainian border. In the UK, documents like these will be required in a visa application to demonstrate a family link, and delays in producing certified translations may result in long waiting times before a visa application can be submitted. By funding the translation of these templates, the ATC, together with the wider task force, aims to facilitate a faster, safer, and more structured path to successful visa applications."

A channel of communication with the UK's Ukrainian communities

The task force is opening up a direct channel of communication with the UK's existing Ukrainian communities for the dissemination of information on language support.

NRPSI's Executive Director and Registrar Mike Orlov leads the initiative: "It is absolutely vital that information about language support reaches the Ukrainian communities in the UK. We know that family members in the UK are desperately worried about their loved ones, and are in constant contact with them on their journey to the UK. We are reaching out to the Ukrainian communities to build an open channel of communication to continue to understand what language support the refugees most critically – and in the longer term – need, and what our language support resources can do for them."

Ukrainian-English translation and interpreting

A key challenge in the UK, both in the short and long term, is the limited number of Ukrainian-English translators and interpreters.

The ITI's Chief Executive Paul Wilson comments, "There simply are not very many UK-based Ukrainian into English translators or interpreters. It is imperative for us to identify and communicate where refugees can access language support, and what the task force can do to help build a future pipeline for translation and interpreting support."

The CIOL's Chief Executive John Worne concurs, "Alongside limited resources in the UK, we are of course seeing huge disruption to the language services our translator colleagues in Ukraine are able to provide. For translation, there is hope beyond the UK's borders for immediate professional help; but face-to-face interpreting assignments with the competent authorities will also need to take place here, with properly qualified interpreters to support people through processes which have the highest stakes for them and their families."

Language support and how you can help

Charity Translators, a grass-roots volunteer organisation working with the charity sector, maintains a master list of language support links and organisations providing language support:

<https://www.charitytranslators.org/LinksforUkraine>

Cari Bottois, Co-founder of Charity Translators, is heartened by the support the language services community has shown in the early days of the crisis: "Translators, interpreters, language service companies, associations and charities are coming together to do whatever they can. Bringing together and signposting all resources for language support will be one of our key tasks in the coming weeks and months."

