

## Operational Decision Record

<b>Publication Date</b> 25 April 2023	<b>Decision Reference Number</b> 4920
<b>Decision Title</b>	
Hong Kong British Nationals ESOL Funding - Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities	
<b>Decision Value</b>	
Up to £140,000	
<b>Revenue or Capital Spend?</b>	
Revenue	
<b>Department</b>	
Growth & City Development. Economic Development - Employment and Skills	
<b>Contact Officer (Name, job title, and contact details)</b>	
Owen Harvey - Head of Employment Skills & Strategy	
<b>Decision Taken</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. To accept up to £140,000 in grant funding from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing &amp; Communities (DLUHC) to fund English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) support for Hong Kong British Nationals between January 2023 - March 24</li> <li>II. To allocate DLUHC funds for delivery of the initiative to local delivery partners</li> </ol>	
<b>Reasons for Decision and Background Information</b>	
<p><b><u>Summary</u></b></p> <p>In March 2023, DLUHC announced the continuation of its Hong Kong British Nationals Welcome programme for 2023/24. This includes continued demand-led funding for local authorities in England for English language courses.</p> <p>As a result, DLUHC have implemented a new national ESOL support programme for Hong Kong British Nationals to support Civic integration at a local level and enhance English language skills.</p>	

Hong Kong British Nationals are not eligible for free Education Skills Funding Agency EOSL support currently funded through the Adult Education Budget, which is why DLUHC have established this bespoke funded programme.

Whilst Local Authorities will not deliver support, DLUHC have requested Local Authorities coordinate claim submissions via the DLUHC DELTA System and distribute payments to delivery partners locally, for which Local Authorities will receive a flat administration fee of 20%.

This is DLUHCs preferred methodology to reduce national administration costs as Local Authorities are already set up on DELTA.

Local Delivery Partners have been selected by East Midlands Council's.

The Local Authority role includes:

1. Receiving electronic ILR returns from local delivery partners
2. Submitting ILR returns to DLUHC via DELTA
3. Receiving grant payments and distributing this to delivery partners

The project will support delivery of employment and skills priorities set out in both the strategic council plan economic recovery and renewal plan (e.g. removing barriers to learning and employment)

The project will support c160 individuals. Funding of up to £850per adult is available to support access to ESOL support.

The project represents no risk to the Council for the following reasons:

- This programme does not have performance related targets and as such NCC are not subject to any performance management related obligations (e.g. areas deliver what they can and claim funds retrospectively in accordance with local demand)
- claims are made quarterly and in arrears. NCC will pay delivery partners only once it receives funding from DLUHC
- delivery not subject to Ofsted inspection
- administration of project will be overseen by the existing Community Family Learning Team and requires no additional staffing resource due to light touch nature of claims and number of learners. No additional staffing roles/resource is required

The receipt and distribution of funds will be managed within Economic Development.

## **Background Information**

An immigration route opened on 31 January 2021, providing British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) status holders from Hong Kong and their eligible dependants with the opportunity to come to the UK to live, study and work, on a pathway to citizenship.

This route reflects the UK's historic and moral commitment to those people of Hong Kong who chose to retain their ties to the UK by taking up BN(O) status at the point of Hong Kong's handover to China in 1997.

On 30 November 2022, a change to the BN(O) visa route was announced which will allow some adult children of BN(O) status holders to apply to the route independently from their BN(O) parent.

In March 2023, DLUHC announced the continuation of its Hong Kong BN(O) Welcome programme for 2023/24. This includes continued demand-led funding for local authorities in England for English language courses.

The ambition is for local authorities making claims for this funding to build upon existing English language infrastructure in place within their local area, through collaboration with community groups and English language providers already established within their local area.

Funding of up to £850 per adult is available to support access to English language classes for those on the BN(O) route for courses. Nottingham City Council will receive 20% administration fee per learner, to support with the management of the claim process.

Funds will be allocated on a quarterly retrospective basis.

Nottingham City Council will work local delivery partners identified by East Midlands Councils. Partners include: Begin, Nottingham College, Belong, WEA, Enable and Inspire.

Belong have received additional direct funding from the East Midlands Councils to co-ordinate referrals to ensure citizens access provision at the appropriate level to their learning needs, at times / days that suit their needs.

Local data shows that there are approximately 4,000 Hong Kong BNO in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. This is an estimate based on those who engage with a diaspora group, there is no official collection of data on Hong Kongers for many reasons, not least security concerns.

To date Belong have engaged with 486 Hong Kong British Nationals of which 35% live within Nottingham City boundaries. Evidence is showing that demand has increased over the last two months.

## **Other Options Considered and why these were rejected**

Not to accept funding to coordinate claim submissions.

Only Local Authorities can apply for this funding therefore, if Nottingham City Council did not undertake this administrative role, c160 Hong Kong British Nationals would miss out on the opportunity to receive vital ESOL free support.

**Reasons why this decision is classified as operational**

The value of the decision is below £250,000

The decision being taken is within agreed policies (e.g. Keep Nottingham Working) and within the overall agreed budget controlled by the officer taking the decision

The decision seeks to accept grant funding to implement agreed policies, up to the value of £250,000.

**Additional Information**

**Finance comments**

The Decision to accept up to £140,000 in grant funding from The DLUHC to fund ESOL support for Hong Kong British Nationals between January 2023 - March 2024 is approved as this will support Nottingham citizens. The Claims to DLUHC and Payments to delivery partners will be monitored by the Business and reflected in the budget and forecast for the service, to ensure this will not have any detrimental effect to the MTFP.

Paul Rogers Business Partner G&CD

**Decision Maker (Name and Job Title)**

Sajeeda Rose – Corporate Director, Growth & City Development

**Scheme of Delegation Reference Number**

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**Date Decision Taken**

24/04/2023