

I note from your website that Wigan Council is offering a range of free services specifically to Ukrainian immigrants. Can you also confirm that these services are being equally offered to majority ethnic Russian people from the Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk, and Zaporizhzhia regions who are attempting, or have been attempting, to escape persecution, torture and genocide by elements of the Ukrainian government?

Does Wigan Council recognise that many borough residents (including those of Russian nationality and ethnic Russians from other countries) do not support and do condemn the State of Ukraine's appalling conduct since 2014 in relation to those Ukrainian citizens who identify as culturally Russian? Many terrible human rights atrocities and persecutions have been, and are being committed by elements of the Ukrainian State since 2014 on people who identify as ethnically Russian.

Has Wigan Council made any statement on this human rights issue, while seemingly deciding for all residents of the borough that we support the State of Ukraine in the fighting in the above regions?

Can you confirm the cost to the borough taxpayer of these 'free' services being offered to Ukrainians since February 2022 to date. Approximate figures will do to save you time.

Wigan Council will support and assist any individual regardless of protected characteristics such as ethnicity, nationality, religion, and social beliefs. Our support is based on individual needs and extends to all our residents.

I am refusing to provide this information under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act, on the basis that it is reasonably accessible to you by other means. The information you have requested is available to you via our social media channels. Section 21 is designed to ensure that FOI is not used for disclosures of information where a mechanism for that disclosure already exist. Section 21 is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test.

We do not hold the information that you have requested in an easily retrievable format. Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) relieves a public authority from the obligation to comply with a request for information where the estimated time required to locate, review and extract the information exceeds a certain threshold set out in Regulations.

The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/3244) set out the rules in relation to the cost limit (otherwise called the "appropriate limit"). These Regulations are published by the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI) and are viewable on their web site from this link:  
[http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/uksi\\_20043244\\_en.pdf](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/uksi_20043244_en.pdf)

The Regulations set out the cost limit for Government departments and for other public authorities. For local government, Regulation 3 states that the cost limit is £450 and Regulation 4(4) states that the prescribed hourly rate is £25. Regulation 4(4) further provides that where the local authority estimates the time taken to gather the information would exceed this limit (which based on the prescribed hourly rate, equates to 18 officer hours), it may refuse the request under section 12 of FoIA.

I am satisfied the cost limit applies to your request and will explain why this is the case.

To gather the information requested would involve obtaining the records from every Directorate and Service within the Council and its trusted partners. This could involve going into thousands of records individually which would far exceed the allotted time scale of 18 hours and far exceed the allotted expense of doing so.