

Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development – Neil Gray
Briefing for Ministerial Visit to M/S Ambition

What	MSP visit to the M/S Ambition, the cruise ship in Glasgow providing Welcome Accommodation for displaced Ukrainians
Where	M/S Ambition Clyde Port Ltd King George V Dock Glasgow G51 4SD <i>(map, arrival and parking arrangements at Annex A)</i>
Date and Time of Engagement	Wednesday 19 October 2022 14.30-15:30
Key Message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a nation Scotland has risen in solidarity with Ukrainians in their hour of need. • Since the conflict began, more than 20,000 people with a Scottish sponsor have arrived, representing around 20% of all UK arrivals - the most per head of any of the four nations. More than 16,000 of these arrivals are via the Scottish Government Super Sponsor Scheme. • The M/S Ambition, along with her sister ship the M/S Victoria I docked in Edinburgh, is providing much needed short-term accommodation to people who have fled Ukraine. • Alongside hotel accommodation, the passenger ships will safely accommodate people until they are able to move into suitable longer-term accommodation. • We are clear that we do not want people spending more time in temporary accommodation, such as passenger ships, than is absolutely necessary.
Why	<p>To visit the M/S Ambition and see its facilities and operational activities now that UDPs are on board.</p> <p>To take questions from MSPs visiting the ship on its use, and Scotland’s response to support displaced people from Ukraine.</p>
Who	<p>MSPs Foyso Choudhury MSP Paul Sweeney MSP</p> <p>MSP Support (redacted)</p>

Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development – Neil Gray
Briefing for Ministerial Visit to M/S Ambition

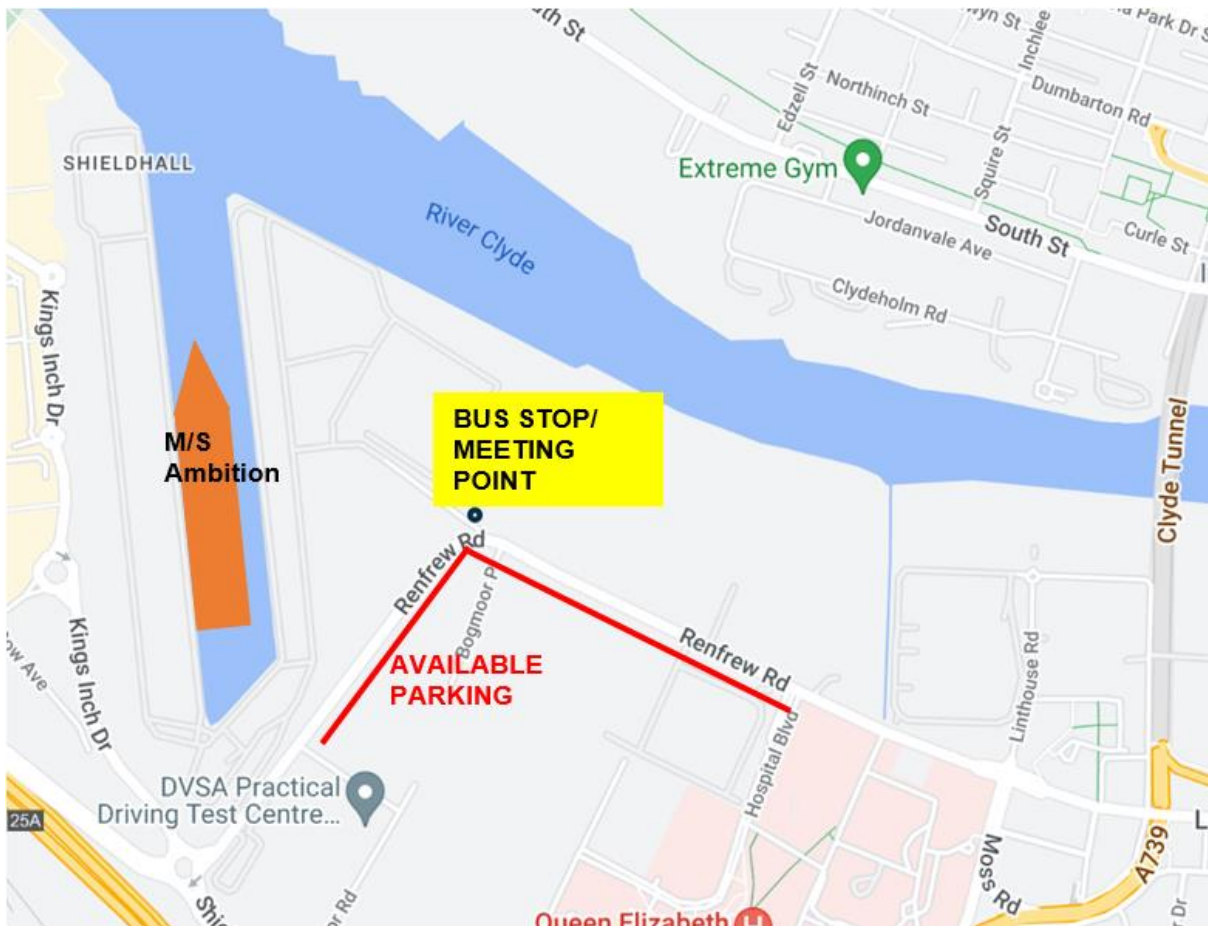
	<p>Glasgow City Council (redacted) Asylum & Refugee Service (redacted) (redacted) Head of Adult Services (Criminal Justice and Homelessness), Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership</p> <p>Landry and Kling (redacted) (redacted)</p>
Supporting officials	<p>(redacted) Ukraine Resettlement (redacted)</p> <p>(redacted) Ukraine Resettlement (redacted)</p>
Briefing contents	<p>Annex A: Map and Parking Arrangements Annex B: Programme Annex C: Q&A – Top Lines Annex D: Biographies</p>
Media Handling	No media is planned.
Greeting Party and specific meeting point on arrival (if event is at a non SE Building)	<p>(redacted) and Scottish Government Officials (Redacted) will meet you at the bus shelter where the shuttle bus will take you to the ship.</p> <p>You will be issued with a boarding pass on arrival and escorted onboard.</p> <p>All visitors to the ship will need to bring photo ID with them to the visit</p>

ARRIVAL AND PARKING INFORMATION

All visitors must show photo ID on arrival.

M/S Ambition
Clyde Port Ltd
King George V Dock
Glasgow
G51 4SD

- Please park on Renfrew Road in either direction outside the main gate. There are no parking restrictions in this area.
- There is then a bus shelter at the main gate. **(redacted)** and Scottish Government Officials will meet you to take the shuttle bus to the ship at 14:30.



**Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development – Neil Gray
Briefing for Ministerial Visit to M/S Ambition**

ANNEX B

PROGRAMME

- 14:25** **Minister arrives at the shuttle bus stop to enter Clydeport dockyard**
Met by **(redacted)** and Scottish Government Officials **(redacted)** at the bus stop.
- 14:30** **Minister and guests take the shuttle bus towards the Bus M/S Ambition**
You will be issued with a boarding pass on arrival and escorted onboard.
- 15:10** **Tour of M/S Ambition accommodation and facilities with MSPs**
Will be led by **(redacted)** and **(redacted)**.
- 15:25** **Question and Answer session with MSPs**
Q&A will take place in the Conference Room onboard the ship.
- 15:30** **Minister departs**

TOP LINES

M/S AMBITION

- The Scottish Government is taking a creative approach to securing temporary accommodation for displaced people, including chartering two passenger ships. The first of these, M/S Victoria I, is docked in Leith for 6 months from July, is providing 739 cabins for up to 2,200 people.
- M/S Ambition, our second passenger ship is docked on the Clyde in Glasgow and will provide a further 714 cabins for up to 1,750 people. The first guests boarded on 14 September.
- As of 17 October, there are 1027 guests on board (including 367 children). There is a total of 490 occupied cabins (210 vacant) but this is expected to be at capacity by c.23 October. 63% of guests on board are female.
- The M/S Ambition has arrived fully crewed, 22 of whom speak Ukrainian.
- Work continues with a range of partners regarding safeguarding, health and safety, public protection and waste management to ensure that the ship is suitable temporary accommodation for our guests. This also includes work to provide guests on board with access to appropriate support services, including healthcare and benefits support.
- Passengers have access to restaurants, child play facilities, shops, cleaning and communal spaces. They are free to come and go from the ship as with any other temporary accommodation.
- The Ukrainian Consul-General has visited the sister ship at Leith, where he expressed satisfaction at the provisions made for displaced people and the facilities available.
- I previously visited M/S Ambition on 7th September ahead of the ship accommodating guests and I am pleased to see our guests now comfortably accommodated on-board.

ACCOMMODATION

Q: Where will UDPs go after the ship has left?

- The Scottish Government contracted the ship on a short-term basis to provide safe and comfortable temporary accommodation for displaced peoples immediate arrival needs.
- The Scottish Government and partners are working at pace to match displaced people into suitable longer term accommodation.

Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development – Neil Gray

Briefing for Ministerial Visit to M/S Ambition

- In addition, we are supporting guests to secure longer-term accommodation through other means, such as private rental.
- We have made sure that displaced Ukrainians are able to access the Scottish Government's full range of employment support services, such as Fair Start Scotland and employability services that are offered with local authorities and local employability partnerships.

Q: What is the plan for Longer-Term Accommodation for UDPs?

- On 22 September, we introduced a new fund with up to £50m to bring council and Registered Social Landlord properties into use and to increase the housing supply and support displaced people from Ukraine into longer-term sustainable housing.
- This fund will support those efforts and bring properties into use. Early discussions with a number of interested Councils have indicated potential to do more through this route.
- We are also taking a number of actions to speed up the matching process. This includes funding additional staff in local authorities and we are also introducing a new digital matching tool to support the matching process.
- Through these interventions, we aim to ease the pressure on the accommodation sector.

Q: How are you limiting the spread of Covid-19?

- We are closely monitoring the spread of COVID in Scotland and closely work with Public Health colleagues to monitor any risks of contracting COVID within the passenger ship.
- Displaced people from Ukraine can also ask for a free COVID-19 vaccination from the NHS after arrival, if they choose to be vaccinated.
- The ship has a policy for common infectious diseases including COVID-19, with safeguards in place and crew appropriately trained. The NHS is servicing the vessel with a medic and staff throughout the week, providing medical care for both Ukrainian guests and crew.
- Doctors aboard the ship are obligated to report any cases of infectious disease to the NHS, and Tallink, the ship's operator, is also responsible for reporting COVID-19 cases that are detected by the ship's on-board team to the NHS.

FACILITIES

Q: What facilities are onboard the ship?

- There are a variety of services on-board for guests. This includes restaurants, child play facilities with toys and books, shops, laundry, cleaning, Wi-Fi access and communal spaces.

Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development – Neil Gray Briefing for Ministerial Visit to M/S Ambition

- Guests also have access to benefits support and healthcare services, including a GP service onshore with outreach on-board the ship.
- Ukrainian or Ukrainian speaking reception staff are also available 24/7 on board.

Q: What safeguarding measures are in place onboard the ship?

- Ensuring the wellbeing and safety of those arriving from Ukraine is our priority.
- Working with partners, the Scottish Government arranges the provision of accommodation, safeguarding and access to services, this includes for those on board the MS Ambition.
- An initial triage of all guests' needs, including any potential safeguarding concerns, takes place at the Welcome Hub before boarding the ship.
- Glasgow City Council resettlement teams have an ongoing and visible presence on-board the ship, alongside teams from the third sector, who guests can raise any concerns with.
- Nominated public protection officers on board provide support and are the first point of contact for any concerns arising when local authority professionals are not available. They are trained in how to respond effectively and escalate matters to the local authority where necessary. Ukrainian or Ukrainian speaking reception staff are also available 24/7 on board.
- Regular drop in clinics and appointment bookings are available daily for all on-board guests held by various partners including by NHS Services and Department for Work and Pensions.
- Staff on board are also trained in linking with local law enforcement and are aware of reporting procedures if required.

Q: What support is the Scottish Government providing to ensure local services do not become over-burdened?

- The Scottish Government is working closely with COSLA and local authorities to ensure a national approach to supporting displaced people from Ukraine.
- As set out in the New Scots refugee integration strategy, we have a tried and tested approach to integrating displaced people into our communities, schools and workplaces.
- People living on the ship are able to use the address for local services as is the case for people staying in other temporary accommodation.

**Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development – Neil Gray
Briefing for Ministerial Visit to M/S Ambition**

FUNDING

Q: Cost of the ship?

- The ships are comparable per room to the cost of hotels. The costs of the scheme are being responsibly managed in line with the Scottish Government's normal financial procedures. Work continues to expand our provision of temporary and longer-term accommodation so that we can gradually move away from ship (and hotel) accommodation.

Q: Will Scottish Government cover additional costs incurred by local authorities?

- I understand that arrangements underpinning the super sponsor have incurred costs which could be considered out of scope of the various UK tariffs.
- £11.2 million has been made available to support local government increase resourcing of resettlement teams and refurbish properties. An additional £1 million was also made available for welcome activities. We are working to ensure that all of this money is available to meet Super Sponsor costs incurred by local authorities.
- My officials are working to identify all options to maximise accommodation, reduce costs and prioritise those most in need.
- On 30 September, the 'Ukraine Senior Oversight Group' which includes COSLA, City of Edinburgh Council and the Scottish Refugee Council gave support to the review and next steps we plan to implement for the Scottish Super Sponsor.
- I'm committed to improving the scheme. I will make a statement to Parliament which is expected on Tuesday 1 November (postponed from 27 October) to update on next steps.

Q: What is staff pay onboard the MS Ambition?

- (redacted)
- (redacted)

Q: Do children onboard have access to education?

- All children resident in Scotland, including those onboard the ship, are entitled to an education irrespective of their immigration status. We are actively working with local authorities, COSLA and others to support this through the Ukraine Education Partners Group.

As of 6 October, there are currently 247 children on board the M/S Ambition, 182 of whom are of school age. These children have been registered at local schools and school busses have been put in place (in addition to the standard

Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development – Neil Gray

Briefing for Ministerial Visit to M/S Ambition

shuttle bus that runs throughout the day). A process is in place to register new arrivals with schools to ensure their education can continue.

- Officials are planning to collect and publish the statistics of Ukrainian children in education on a regular basis, in due course.

SUPER SPONSOR SCHEME

Q: Will the Super Sponsor Scheme Reopen? / What is the outcome of the Policy Review?

- We have undertaken a review of the operation of the Super Sponsor scheme and the warm Scots welcome to ensure that we can provide appropriate and sustainable longer-term support to those who are here, as well as to those who are still arriving and are due to travel.
- A meeting with senior leaders and officials from Scottish Government, COSLA and partners took place on Friday 30 September to discuss the interventions identified and next steps on the policy review.
- Continued partnership must be at the core of delivering and improving the super sponsor scheme. I would like to thank our partners for their continued support.
- I'm committed to improving the scheme. I will make a statement to Parliament which is expected on Tuesday 1 November (postponed from 27 October) to update on progress.

ENGAGEMENT

Q: What engagement have Scottish Government had with COSLA to date?

- The Scottish Government has regular and ongoing engagement with COSLA which includes discussing housing needs for Ukrainian displaced people in Scotland and funding support.
- Most recently a meeting with senior leaders and officials from Scottish Government, COSLA and partners took place on 30 September to discuss next steps and agreed support into the review of the Super Sponsor scheme.

Q: What other engagement is taking place ahead of the Ministerial Statement?

- I maintain a regular and positive dialogue with Yevhen Mankovskyi, Consul General, who remains very supportive of Scotland's response to the crisis and recognises the significant constraints we face.
- We also continue to work in concert with the Welsh Minister for Social Justice, including pressing the UK Government to increase 'thank you' payments to hosts to reflect rising costs of inflation, and a variety of other issues.

Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development – Neil Gray
Briefing for Ministerial Visit to M/S Ambition

- Ahead of my statement in early November, this engagement will broaden to include the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain and other key stakeholders.

BIOGRAPHIES

Foyso Choudhury MSP (Labour) for Lothian (Region)



Foyso Choudhury is a Scottish Labour politician, currently the Scottish Parliament member for Lothians since May 2021, Shadow Minister for Culture and Europe and International Development.

He was born in Bangladesh and moved to Edinburgh over 35 years ago, and studied in the city before taking over the family business in hospitality.

He is the Chair of Edinburgh & Lothian's Regional Equality Council.

Paul Sweeney MSP (Labour) for Glasgow (Region) 2021



Paul was brought up in Auchinairn and Milton in the north of Glasgow.

He was one of only three Labour MPs to have served in the Armed Forces.

After undertaking an internship with BAE Systems at Portsmouth Naval Base as an undergraduate, Paul joined the company's graduate development programme in 2011, based at the Govan and Scotstoun shipyards on the Clyde, where he undertook a series of roles in production engineering and shipbuilding operations.

Paul has been a member of the Labour Party and the Co-operative Party since he was a student in 2008.