

Welcome to the 'Bilingual Language Assistant' service

Six bilingual language assistants are currently employed across the Highland Council area. They provide support to families who are new to Scotland to help them settle into their local communities. They are available to assist with language support throughout the Highland area. They can provide information on services which are available, and help families to register for GP practices, dentists, school enrolment etc. They can also provide information on cultural events, centres and associations in the area with a view to reducing feelings of isolation, and to help families to successfully integrate into their communities.

Although the assistants are based in different areas they may work in any part of the Highland Council area depending on the language needs of the families.

From 8th January 2008, the management of the Bilingual Language Assistants has passed to Community Learning and Leisure, and will be managed by Julie Simmons. Referral forms should be sent to Blareferrals@highland.gov.uk with a copy to the appropriate Language Assistant. Their email addresses are as follows:

Anna Holda has been living in Scotland for 2 years. She speaks fluent English and her home language is Polish.

Anna.Holda@hcs.uhi.ac.uk

Anna Myeshkova-Monaghan has been living in Scotland for 3 years. She speaks fluent English, Ukrainian and Russian, and has a basic knowledge of Polish. She can also support Russian-speaking families from Latvia and Lithuania.

Anna.Myeshkova-Monaghan@hcs.uhi.ac.uk

Lucyna Dubanowska has been in Scotland for over 20 years and before working as a Language Assistant, has helped families from Poland, previously on a voluntary basis.

lucyna.dubanowska@hcs.uhi.ac.uk

Renata Grove has been settled in Scotland since 1999. Renata speaks fluent English. Her mother tongue is Czech, but she understands and speaks Slovak as well. She has a basic knowledge of Polish.

Renata.Gove@highland.gov.uk

Harvinder Kainth has been settled in Scotland for over 15 years. Harvinder speaks fluent English, Hindi, Punjabi, Bengali and Urdu. She can also support Gujarati families.

Harvinder.Kainth@highland.gov.uk

Magdalena Kruk has been in Scotland for a year, and previously taught English in Lodz in Poland. Her native language is Polish. Magdalena is based in Lochaber.

Magdalena.Kruk@highland.gov.uk

The Bilingual Language Assistants may be in contact with schools and other organisations/groups to introduce themselves.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Will bilingual language assistants (BLAs) be solely based in schools?
No, the role of the BLA is to assist families and help them to settle in to their local community.

Will they work exclusively with children and families who speak the same mother tongue as the BLA?

No, BLAs can offer help to families of any nationality and language background. There are issues which are common to families for whom English is an additional language.

What can I ask a BLA to do in my school?

Bilingual assistants may be able to assist with enrolment and other administrative matters where language may be a barrier. They may also be able to translate important leaflets or documents.

Can BLAs work in classrooms?

Yes, all BLAs are able to assist with pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) in the classroom if required.

Can they be used to teach English?

No, they are not employed as teachers. However they are able to help support the children's acquisition of language under the direction of the class and other teachers - e.g. games, group work and activities to support inclusion and the acquisition of English.

They can also help set up systems within schools, such as buddying etc where established children with EAL can support new arrivals.

They can also help encourage cultural exchange.

Do BLAs work with EAL teachers?

Yes, they work closely with all support team staff, and may accompany EAL teachers on initial visits to schools and families.

How else can BLAs work?

They can support parents and pupils in liaison group meetings, explain school procedures, how to access medical and other services, library provisions, benefits, banking, the justice system, transport

systems - in fact anything that a family new to the culture, would need to know.

How is the Service accessed?

The referral form from the Website should be completed by any agency (including Education, Culture and Sport) involved with a family with EAL. The web link is:

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/A8880D05-E972-4FDA-BA9F-37C84DEC4B91/0/ENGLISHASANADDITIONALLANGUAGE.dot>

Please send form to Blareferrals@highland.gov.uk

Further information can be found at

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/learninghere/supportforlearners/eal.htm>