

Progressing resettled refugees into employment

A guide for organisations supporting
refugees

March 2019

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CONTENTS

Introduction	5
Refugees into employment – an overview	5
Who is this guide for?	6
What does the guide cover?	6
How to use the guide?	6
A note on terminology	7
Key considerations in supporting refugees into employment.....	8
Barriers to refugee employment.....	8
Addressing multiple and overlapping barriers	10
Multi-agency working with Jobcentre Plus and others	11
Looking for work in the UK	13
The nature of paid work and work culture	13
Applying for and getting jobs.....	14
English language, ESOL and employability	15
Prior Experience	18
Qualifications	18
Training, re-training and apprenticeships	18
Supporting refugees into employment.....	20
People supporting refugees to find work.....	20
Intercultural competence and effective intercultural working.....	21
Initial assessment - English language.....	24
Initial assessment - vocational qualifications and experience	25
Recognition of prior achievement.....	25
Accessing careers advice and other information, advice and guidance	26
National Careers Service	27
Skills auditing	28
Skills assessment and validation	29
Getting recognition for qualifications	32
Professional recognition, re-training and up-skilling.....	32

Career action plans	33
Profile of refugees arriving through VPRS and referral to appropriate services	39
Life CV	40
Employment or job-search support workshops	41
Joined-up working	41
The (local) labour market.....	47
Career and labour market information.....	47
Making sense of labour market information	47
Labour market for refugees.....	49
Refugee awareness	52
Employers' awareness of refugees	55
Engaging with employers	55
Raising employer awareness of refugees	56
Tools, resources and organisations.....	62

INTRODUCTION

Refugees into employment – an overview

Refugees arriving in the UK through the Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) are highly motivated to find employment at the earliest opportunity and to continue with education and training that may have been interrupted by conflict. This is equally true of refugees who arrive through other routes and it goes some way to challenge the myths that refugees are reluctant to work and that they take advantage of welfare benefits. Refugees are frequently isolated by unemployment and under-employment and a dependence on social welfare, which can exclude them and their families from participating in different spheres of mainstream society, and they may need support to enter employment.

Rightly, initial resettlement support is typically focused on basic needs, including accommodation, healthcare, basic income and children's education. This is followed by support to access English language learning opportunities. Ensuring that all these needs are appropriately addressed can take some time due to complexities of need, availability of support and challenges in accessing services. The delay in employment-related support, due to these and other factors, can have a detrimental effect on refugees' confidence, their self-esteem and can lead to deskilling. Refugees need advice and support in making choices and decisions regarding learning and work and understanding implications for income, housing and health, at the same time.

Availability of central government funding means that local authorities participating in the VPRS have a unique opportunity to provide integration support to resettled refugees during their first five years in the UK, including support for refugees to adjust, to become independent and integrated into their local communities. Provision of employment support is recognised as one of the key areas of support, alongside integration casework, language support, community involvement and legal support¹. Local authorities are required to demonstrate progress in different areas, including 'tailored employment support'². The identified different areas of support are interlinked and have implications for refugees' access to employment.

¹ Resettling refugees: support after the first year - a guide for local authorities (2017)
<https://www.local.gov.uk/resettling-refugees-support-after-first-year-guide-local-authorities>

² As above, page 17

Who is this guide for?

This guide is for agencies in the South East (SE) region who are involved in supporting the resettlement of refugees through the government resettlement schemes³. This includes local authorities, agencies commissioned to deliver resettlement support, ESOL⁴ providers, Community Sponsors, Jobcentre Plus and National Careers Service⁵.

The guide can be used to inform and help with different aspects of employment support for refugees:

- setting up discrete provision,
- integrating it within existing services and roles,
- providing direct support to refugees to progress into employment,
- commissioning services.

What does the guide cover?

- Key considerations in supporting refugees into employment, including approaches to multi-agency working and preparing refugees for the UK labour market.
- Approaches to high quality initial assessment, including language and occupational skills.
- Approaches to information, advice and guidance including careers advice, skills auditing, recognition of prior learning and up-skilling, including available tools and resources.
- Case-studies of effective practice, drawing together examples already identified in the SE region and newly identified models.

How to use the guide?

The guide is divided into sections on different topics, such as 'Skills auditing', 'Getting recognition for qualifications gained in other countries' or 'Raising employer's awareness of refugees'. The Guide is not a 'how to' manual but signposts the reader to other materials focused on 'how to' support refugees in finding work, as

³ It also has wider relevance for any organisation supporting the resettlement of refugees across England.

⁴ ESOL stands for English for Speakers of Other Languages

⁵ The National Careers Service provides information, advice and guidance across England to help young people and adults make decisions on learning, training and work.

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/>

most readers are unlikely to be conducting workshops or guidance sessions themselves.

You can read the guide in full or go to the section that is most relevant for you. There is some repetition so that each section can be read without too much cross-reference. Details of useful information or publications and staff development resources are given in the 'Tools, Resources and Organisations' section at the end of this guide.

Please note that we are not including in this Guide items about which good general information is already available. Therefore, for example, nothing is included about basic CVs or filling in application forms, as these are offered by the main agencies such as National Careers Service, and nothing would be served by adding such information here.

The Guide encourages the reader to adopt an approach of working 'with' (rather than 'for') refugees in a way which is 'educational' and facilitates learning when it comes to employability. In other words, when working on any aspect of the employment or careers advice and support process, refugees can be supported to engage with the process and enabled to learn throughout so that they can strengthen and further develop skills and knowledge to be more independent in making future choices and decisions related to employment, education and training. This approach also recognises that refugees have a role in informing the work of those in advice and support roles.

A note on terminology

Client, customer and claimant are terms used by advice agencies; in the case of National Careers Service customer is used, whereas Jobcentre Plus uses claimant and other agencies tend to use client. Where possible this Guide has used the terms refugee or person rather than either claimant, client or customer, but might occasionally use client when appropriate.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS IN SUPPORTING REFUGEES INTO EMPLOYMENT

Barriers to refugee employment

Employment, as one of the key functional aspects of refugee integration, is closely linked to housing, healthcare and education, and, of course, income. However, finding employment is one of the main challenges both for refugees and for the staff within organisations that offer support, including employment support. This is the case for refugees who arrive through the 'asylum route' as well as resettled refugees. Low employment rates are reported for all refugees⁶.

There is no legal obstacle to people who have been recognised as refugees gaining employment, but there are a number of issues and challenges that may need to be considered. The barriers faced by refugees seeking employment are often perceived as individual, for example, a refugee's lack of English language skills, unfamiliarity with the UK labour market and job-seeking practices, or health problems. However, these challenges are compounded by limited opportunities to overcome them and a range of other, institutional and structural barriers which include:

- a lack of specific initiatives for refugee employment,
- limited access to mainstream opportunities to develop skills, knowledge and gain qualifications,
- career and employment advisers' lack of skills and understanding of issues affecting refugees,
- employers' lack of awareness of refugees' potential and skills⁷.

The diversity of the refugee population means that not all will experience the same barriers or to the same extent. This will be determined by their individual circumstances and experiences, both, prior to arriving in the UK and their current situation. The focus of the VPRS on the most vulnerable refugees, including people with complex needs from Syria, means that some barriers to employment, for example health problems, medical care needs, low literacy and very low levels of English on arrival, may be more prevalent than typically found in other groups of refugees. The support to address these barriers' impact on employment may require

⁶ For example, see report Sheffield Hallam University, The Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (2011) An Evaluation of the Gateway Protection Programme

<https://www4.shu.ac.uk/research/cresr/sites/shu.ac.uk/files/eval-gateway-protection-programme.pdf>

⁷ Refugee employment strategy, 'Working to Rebuild Lives' published in 2005 stated that 'Many refugees fail to become engaged with the labour market because their particular needs cannot be met through existing provision.'

a longer-term engagement and planning and involve specialist services such as occupational therapy, disability and carers' advice and information, or trauma counselling. The approach can be based on a recognition that health and employment are interlinked, and that good employment is good for health, whilst unemployment can have a negative impact on health.

The following are the most common barriers that impact on refugees' access to employment⁸

- English language, communication skills and literacy,
- Recognition of past experience and achievements,
- Lack of UK work experience and references,
- Refugees' understanding of how systems work in the UK,
- Not knowing where to access appropriate information and advice,
- Application forms, form filling culture and IT skills,
- Gaps in a CV and long periods of inactivity in the workplace,
- Lack of confidence and facing the 'selling yourself' culture,
- Financial struggles (lack of, or limited income, bank accounts, limited mobility),
- Isolation,
- Transport (lack of a driving licence, no car, limited or unfamiliar public transport routes),
- Caring responsibilities/constraints,
- Employer misunderstanding about rights, fear of penalties and prejudice,
- Understanding Jobcentre Plus provision and requirements of employment and training programmes,
- Uncertainty of the future (time limited immigration status, onward migration or being able to return to the home country),

⁸ This list has been compiled based on information from 'Migrants and work' booklet available at: <https://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/userfiles/attachments/pages/625/l-11-migrantsandwork-iun-june2015.pdf>

- Misinformation and false/unrealistic expectations (e.g. the hope of entering into previous profession at the same level).

Further barriers can include: housing and location of resettlement and the available local jobs and the possible disruptions due to legal, health and other issues facing resettled people. These barriers are interlinked and the extent to which they may be experienced and impact on individual refugees will differ. For example, refugees' lack of appropriate prior experience or qualifications can be a difficulty but again this may be compounded by the lack of opportunity for appropriate vocational training and, on the other hand, refugees who are qualified to carry out a profession may find that their qualifications are not valid in the UK context.

A series of other barriers concern overlapping areas, such as the need to study conflicting with the need to find paid work quickly and simultaneously risking benefit payments if any activities undertaken take someone over a limit or a rule. At the same time, rumours circulate amongst resettled refugees, such as that evictions from housing will happen once employment has been gained. In order to address such issues in the hope of preventing misunderstandings and worse from happening, agencies and support workers need to be aware of this and anticipate what can happen so that they can help people to address overlapping barriers. Integrating good quality welfare and benefits advice with any employment related support activities is a useful approach to avoiding and addressing such problems (this is further explored below).

Addressing multiple and overlapping barriers

In a context in which the prevailing discourse focuses on refugees' perceived vulnerability, the skills, knowledge and abilities of refugees and their potential to contribute to the economy and local communities are often poorly recognised and side-lined. Refugees can make excellent employees, due to additional skills and experiences, multiple language skills, the experience of being resourceful and understanding the importance of relationships with others. The approach to improving refugee employment needs to include both measures to support individuals, and initiatives and resources aimed at overcoming other barriers. Furthermore, to address multiple and overlapping barriers, the provision aimed at refugees seeking employment needs to be holistic and integrated, with agencies working together. For example:

- ESOL and employability work need to be integrated,
- measures to increase community integration, such as volunteering, need to include employability and language aims,

- any services which seek to address barriers to integration need to look at a range of outcomes and the needs of people.

Such services also need to tackle institutional or systemic barriers where they arise. There are examples of such joined up thinking that can include different agencies - see the case study below and other case studies in this guide.

Shamia is a Jobcentre Plus Work Coach, and a single point of contact for Syrian refugees in one local area. She works closely with the Borough Council and is co-located with them.

Shamia works to ensure that refugees access ESOL and other learning as soon as possible. Support with CV building and job matching accounts is provided straight away, and children's support is built in alongside other support. Engaging interpreters helps to provide appropriate support and avoid misunderstandings. Access to ICT learning is crucial as most jobs and job searching need both good language and good ICT levels.

When refugees are ready, they are supported into volunteering placements which further support their English language development. Also, short or longer vocational courses and work experience are sourced as and when the client is ready. Work experience rules and work coaches' discretion to support employability through 'steps towards work' initiatives can support refugees to find sustainable employment.

Shamia explained that some refugees have had offers of work that they were keen to accept but short-term jobs are often not in the interest of individuals or Jobcentre Plus. Individuals need support with budgeting to understand the implications of part time/short term/irregular employment on income and on benefits. This needs to include understanding of benefit sanctions and how to avoid these and the impact of the 'benefit cap'.

Multi-agency working with Jobcentre Plus and others

Refugees are eligible and supported to get help and financial support through the UK benefits system through Jobcentre Plus, depending on their situation and circumstances. That is if they are:

- looking for work,

- not well enough to work,
- a lone parent (including if they have a partner who is not living with them),
- on a low income, and/or:
- have reached the qualifying age for Pension Credit⁹.

The following issues should be noted in relation to multi-agency working and, in particular, the involvement of Jobcentre Plus as well as other agencies:

- The discretion given to work coaches and approaches taken across regions and areas can vary. In some areas there may be less allowance for the need to build language skills, a quicker recourse to sanctions and less support to avoid them. The impact of the benefit cap is especially problematic in areas where living costs are higher or which are closer to London.
- Support with bus passes from Jobcentre Plus and/or education providers funded through Adult Education Budget (AEB) or Flexible Support Fund (FSF) is patchy.
- Language/communication problems can impact Jobcentre Plus support. Interpreters should be available (in-person or by telephone) but may need to be requested.
- For UC claimants, whether a course is considered 'full-time' is usually based on the provider's definition or the typical time spent studying by a student; it is not based on the student's attendance.

Refugees' progression is not necessarily linear - whether in language learning, progression into work or any other settlement issue so there is a need for flexibility. Partnerships with Jobcentre Plus at local level are needed to maximise access to training, volunteering and work without falling foul of benefit rules and to manage moving in and out of benefit (see Case Studies on pages 12 and 45). It is advised to bring Jobcentre Plus/DWP (Department for Work and Pensions) into the partnership at the start. This works well where there is a regional strategy - for example, in the South-West of England. Often the existing dispersal areas have better systems of working with Jobcentre Plus in place. If need be, involve regional level DWP managers and develop protocols as they have done in the North East, especially in areas with little prior experience of immigration issues. As this is a wider issue, ESOL coordinators may need to work closely with other project staff.

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/refugees-guidance-about-benefits-and-pensions/help-available-from-the-department-for-work-and-pensions-for-people-who-have-been-granted-leave-to-remain-in-the-uk#looking-for-work>

LOOKING FOR WORK IN THE UK

The nature of paid work and work culture

Recruitment practices and ways of accessing employment vary from one country to another. There will be some similarities between the UK and other countries, as well as differences. It is important that people who are involved in supporting refugees are aware of this and that they have and/or are supported to develop effective intercultural working practice¹⁰. This means that people who are new to the UK are likely to need support to develop an understanding of job search norms, where and how to look for work, how to apply for jobs and how to present the skills and knowledge required. An understanding of some of the norms of workplace behaviour and the expectations of employers and colleagues also needs to be explored.

Refugees may not be aware how to find out about job vacancies in the UK, though they will be offered advice by their work coach at Jobcentre Plus. It is worth reminding them that there are other opportunities than those found through the job centre. Social networks are recognised as a main source of employment support and opportunities. However, refugees' social networks typically include other refugees or co-nationals. Whilst these networks are an important source of support and can lead to employment with co-nationals and/or within the 'ethnic enterprise' sector, opportunities for refugees to develop networks that would facilitate employment in other areas can be limited (particularly for refugees who speak little or no English). The benefits which can accrue from 'bridging' networks, which facilitate access to opportunities such as education or employment, are constrained by structural obstacles arising from legal, economic and social status: lack of resources, English language skills, knowledge of cultural norms and stigma attached to their immigration status¹¹. Understanding this and supporting refugees to access opportunities to widen their social networks are therefore an essential aspect of employment support. In addition, vacancies are promoted online (through a variety of complex pathways) and also via employment agencies - these latter being a frequent source of work for new arrivals seeking low skilled or skilled employment.

Raising refugee awareness about employers is part of the task of supporting refugees to enter the UK labour market. This may also mean helping people to understand and recognise discrimination, know what to do if they face discrimination, encounter inequality or are themselves accused of discriminatory or unequal

¹⁰ This is explained and explored in the section on Intercultural competence and effective intercultural working - see below.

¹¹ Atfield, Brahmhatt and O'Toole. Refugees Experiences of Integration. Refugee Council and University of Birmingham (2007, p7)

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273951112_Refugees'_Experiences_of_Integration

behaviour. It can be easy for misunderstandings to arise when all are unfamiliar with both the norms but also lacking awareness of where those norms are in fact illegal.

Applying for and getting jobs

Although many refugees have worked before arriving in the UK (67% according to the Home Office Survey from 2004), they need support and opportunities to become familiar with the UK job-seeking process, the labour market and work culture. Such opportunities can include support to understand:

- where to find job vacancies and how to respond,
- person specifications,
- job description,
- personal statements on application forms,
- targeted CVs,
- equal opportunities monitoring procedures,
- job interview process, norms and interview techniques - how to present yourself and your skills.

Recruitment processes in the UK (and in other countries) also vary depending on the job sector, employers' size and status (statutory, private, third sector), different occupations, and type and level of qualifications and skills. Recruitment for people within regulated professions will require that they demonstrate that they are authorised to practise.

Refugees may not be aware that access to the UK labour market typically involves a presentation of a CV or a job application form and/or some form of a job interview. Refugees may not be familiar with the idea of a CV and its function, the purpose of the job interview and any job interview conventions. Even when there is an understanding of these practices, refugees may feel that their skills and knowledge, especially when these have not been formally assessed, accredited and recognised, are not relevant for inclusion in a CV or that they cannot attend job interviews because of their lack of confidence in their language skills.

As refugees realise that a professional qualification or prior experience are not sufficient to secure employment in the UK labour market, they may require support to develop communication skills, together with appropriate social and cultural behaviours. Concepts such as 'transferable skills' or 'selling your skills to an employer' need to be introduced and explored in a safe and sensitive manner.

Indeed, the concept of ‘selling’ yourself at interview will be very unfamiliar to many. Some of this is simply new information and some of these skills are formal and easily learned, but others, involving culture and identity, are deeply rooted and not so easy to change.

As application processes are not necessarily familiar or transparent to the refugee applicant, it is useful for support staff to show refugees some of the processes involved before they have to engage with them in an official context. Sometimes these steps are covered in ESOL classes or in ESOL support sessions, but it can be useful to reinforce them through other support mechanisms, such as bespoke vocational workshops, covering areas of employment in the UK. Such workshops can include: Terms and conditions of employment contracts; Health and Safety; PAYE; Customer Service behaviours; and UK or local labour market trends. It is particularly important to include ‘mock interviews’ in any employment-related workshops.

English language, ESOL and employability

Lack of English language skills is often considered to be the main factor in refugees’ integration overall and crucial for effective economic integration. Refugees with a higher level of English language skills are more likely to be employed and are more likely to progress in the development of English language skills. Whilst the process of learning English is not confined to ESOL classes, low level English does hold refugees back from engaging in other learning opportunities such as through volunteering, work experience or work.

Some refugees (and other migrants) manage to find and successfully carry out many job roles without speaking good English at least at the outset. It is the case though that to make further progress in work, English levels need to improve too. For some, spoken English is acquired at work, but this is obviously not the case if someone is working in a monolingual workplace where the language used is the refugee’s first (or even second) language. In multinational workplaces the lingua franca is usually English - and a ‘global’ multinational spoken English will be acquired, which may prove to be enough to get by with in a workplace.

In some sectors which are perceived to be low skilled, low status and certainly low paid, it is an asset, if not essential, to speak English. Learning and Work’s recent report on ESOL and apprenticeships¹² found many examples of people with ESOL needs succeeding on an apprenticeship if it is identified at initial assessment that

¹² Supporting People with English Language Needs to Access Apprenticeships: A Guide for Employers, and Providers of ESOL and Apprenticeships
<https://www.learningandwork.org.uk/resource/supporting-people-with-english-language-needs-to-access-apprenticeships/>

they have the potential to achieve. For example, 'In one large manufacturer, an ESOL learner at Entry Level 2 was taken on as an apprentice and subsequently became a branch manager with the company.' Also, an employer in the care sector identified that apprentices with other languages were able to make a real contribution to the quality of care provided, despite challenges around the Functional Skills requirements in the apprenticeship standard. The example was a care worker who could speak Urdu, which helped him to deliver high quality care to others from the same language background.

It is useful to see the relationship between English language and employment as one consisting of potentially more than one access point. If a refugee has good English skills, they can enter the workforce more readily and with slightly greater choice of potential employment. If they don't start with good English, the person can look at making plans in the short, medium and longer term. This can include, taking jobs with low levels of English required and also taking part in ESOL classes or other ways of acquiring English to a higher level over time with the aim of progressing into better jobs as integration progresses (see career planning below). However, it should be noted that many people struggle to continue to find time, funding and energy to participate in formal classes once they are working full time or because of irregular hours and/or shift patterns.

A report by Refugee Action (2016)¹³ documents the links between employment status and ESOL funding, the eligibility criteria and ESOL qualifications on offer. The case studies included in the report illustrate how the current ESOL offer is not adequate to support refugees' progression into employment.

It is important to maximize opportunities to develop and improve English language skills¹⁴ because:

- It is critical that ESOL provision is accessed at an earliest opportunity.
- Work oriented (or work related) ESOL provision is likely to be more effective in improving refugee employability and can prove attractive to refugees. Increased language confidence and understanding of technical terms in relation to particular areas of employment or specific workplaces.
- Intensive courses can be more effective for the language skills development and to sustain motivation and self-esteem. To make this possible, it is important to remove barriers to intensive learning that may arise from the lack

¹³ Refugee Action (2016) Let Refugees Learn <https://www.refugee-action.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/letrefugeeslearnfullreport.pdf>

¹⁴ See How to Guide (Learning and Work for SEPM) and also https://www.ippr.org/files/ecomms/files/making_it_work.pdf

of availability of ESOL, caring responsibilities, and welfare benefit related restrictions. However, for some people, overly intensive courses can be counter-productive and limit opportunities to actually work or search for work.

The importance of partnership working between different agencies cannot be overemphasised. For ESOL providers it is essential to link with external agencies such as Jobcentre Plus and employers, but also to make links internally between curriculum areas and other services, so that learners can understand what other opportunities exist and can access other learning, such as ICT or vocational courses, as soon as possible. Case studies included in 'ESOL for Employment' illustrate well how partnerships can help to create positive outcomes for organisations involved and for ESOL learners seeking employment¹⁵. A case study from Oxford (see page 59), illustrates examples of employment related ESOL initiatives developed for refugees arriving through VPRS.

Whilst it is clear that English language skills are a key to unlocking the skills and experience of refugees, the level of English required is not the same for all jobs and sectors of employment. However, the level of English required for any job is not always specified.

At the time of the 2011 Census, around 770,000 people in England did not speak English well or at all. Of these, 312,773 people were in employment. There is no readily available recent data about people with no or very little English who are engaged in the UK labour market. The evidence is mainly in reports, including media reports, about workplace exploitation and abuse where lack of language skills is frequently highlighted as a factor that limits workers' understanding of their rights in a workplace which leaves them open to abuse and also limits the possibilities to seek help¹⁶.

The level of English language skills required for some courses, jobs and in particular for professional reorientation are often specified by providers of training and/or regulatory bodies. The International English Language Test System (IELTS) and the Occupational English Test (OET) are often chosen to test the language competency of healthcare professionals in the UK.

¹⁵ NIACE (2013) ESOL for Employment. It includes helpful approaches to ESOL for Employment provision and case studies of successful provision that offer providers the opportunity to find out how others have developed their provision.

<http://www.learningandwork.org.uk.gridhosted.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/ESOL-for-Employment.pdf>

¹⁶ See this report by FLEX, a registered charity working to end labour exploitation:

<http://www.labourexploitation.org/publications/risky-business-tackling-exploitation-uk-labour-market>

For example, nurses and midwives from countries outside the EU and EEA area who wish to register with the Nursing and Midwifery Council are required to evidence their ability to communicate effectively in English by providing an IELTS certificate or an OET certificate that confirm that they have passed the tests at a required level¹⁷.

Prior experience

Many refugees bring considerable work experience with them and it is important to both acknowledge this experience and to understand the refugees' expectations of paid work. It is important to bear in mind that prior work experience in a particular area might not be recognised by employers and/or professional bodies in the UK or might not be equivalent. However, it has been found that if an employer can be persuaded to give a refugee some appropriate work experience it can be found that some skills are transferable and will just need some top-up training. A good example of this would be motor mechanics and often the top up training will especially need to include legal requirements and health and safety in particular.

It is also worth bearing in mind that prior experience may be in a non-transferable skill but the fact of having worked is always useful in the context of a job application/CV.

Qualifications

Many refugees have gained qualifications in their country of origin and the range of qualifications is likely to include diverse occupations and levels. Some common challenges associated with the recognition of qualifications is that refugees may not have or be able to access qualification documents. Other challenges relate to cost (translation and assessment) and the way that qualifications are valued within the UK. More details are in the Recognition of Prior Achievement, and in Getting Recognition for Qualifications sections below.

Training, re-training and apprenticeships

Careers advice and other support for refugees might help them to identify that they need further or entirely new training or re-training in something they can already do to be able to achieve their aspirations in the UK labour market. It is critical to identify good providers of education and training locally to ensure that the decisions that get made at early stage are as good as possible and will truly support the refugee to gain appropriate employment. Some refugees will be eligible for apprenticeships but, like with other training, will need to meet minimum entry requirements including English. It is important to note that an apprenticeship is a job with training – not just a type of course. Therefore, all the usual barriers to employment apply to finding an

¹⁷ <https://www.nmc.org.uk/registration/joining-the-register/english-language-requirements/accepted-tests/>

apprenticeship. In addition, lower rates of pay may be an additional barrier. It is vital to work with a well-regarded apprenticeship provider locally who should be able to assist with the process. Partnership working with local FE colleges and the National Careers Service for the region are vital at this point.

Careers advice can acknowledge the importance of opportunities and benefits of using online resources and tools. These can be utilised to help refugees to learn the English, develop a better understanding of language and culture related to job search and employment, and engage in other online learning to develop skills and knowledge related to their aspirations regarding further learning and employment.¹⁸ Delivering some courses online through platforms such as Zoom¹⁹, can be useful to bring together refugees/learners who are dispersed across a large area to minimise the impact of caring responsibilities, travel cost and distance. Being able to include people from any location can help to recruit viable number of learners to support peer learning and peer support.

The Adult Education Budget (AEB) funding that is available through the Education and Skills Funding Agency, aims to engage adults and provide the skills and learning they need to equip them for work, an apprenticeship or other learning²⁰. The AEB funding rules for the 2018 to 2019 funding year (1 August 2018 to 31 July 2019) contains information about funding priorities and learner eligibility for funding²¹. Adult education providers and the National Careers Service are aware of the full range of courses and qualifications that can be funded under AEB including, for example, everything from functional skills and engineering and manufacturing courses, and GCSEs and BTEC qualifications, to name but a few.

¹⁸ FutureLearn is an example of an online education platform providing a wide range of free courses on different topics and areas of interest and study. <https://www.futurelearn.com/> A list of online learning resources and platforms that can support English language learning is included in the How to Guide and the Pre-entry ESOL: A Factsheet for the South East Region <http://www.secouncils.gov.uk/about-us/about-sespm/sespm-research/>

¹⁹ Zoom offers communications software that combines video conferencing, online meetings, chat, and mobile collaboration. Other similar platforms are available.

²⁰ ESFA funding rules for further education provision for publicly funded colleges, training organisations, local authorities and employers (FE providers) that offer education and skills training. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sfa-funding-rules>

²¹ This document sets out the adult education budget (AEB) funding rules for the 2018 to 2019 funding year for providers of education and training who receive AEB funding <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-education-budget-funding-rules-2018-to-2019>

SUPPORTING REFUGEES INTO EMPLOYMENT

People supporting refugees to find work

It is important to offer employment related support as soon as possible after refugees' arrival taking into account opportunities and possibilities that may be more readily available whilst working towards achieving aspirations in the long term. Refugees are likely to seek and receive initial information about employment possibilities from people who are involved in supporting them with accessing accommodation, health services, education, general orientation to their area and life in the UK and ESOL. The information given may not always be accurate and up to date and it can sometimes create false expectations about employment prospects. This is something that those who engage in career and employment specific work may need to be aware of and address.

Supporting refugees to develop their potential and overcome barriers to employment is sometimes delivered by refugee organisations (e.g. Refugee Council, RETAS²²) or refugee specific services or projects (Aspire Oxford²³ or RAGU²⁴). These initiatives are partly in recognition that effective support requires specialist skills and knowledge but also in acknowledgment that the mainstream provision is inappropriate and exclusive.

In addition to (or in absence of) specialist provision and support there is a range of agencies that could and need to be involved in supporting refugees into employment, including:

- Specialist Employability Support²⁵ providers in your area,
- Jobcentre Plus,
- National Careers Service,
- Education and training providers.

It is important to develop specialist expertise and capacity within the workforce and build strong multiagency partnerships for working with refugees. Anyone working

²² RETAS (Refugee Education Training Advice Service) <http://retasleeds.weebly.com/>

²³ Aspire Oxford Support for Refugees and ESOL Learners to move towards and into paid employment <https://www.aspireoxford.co.uk/our-services/refugees-esol-learners/>

²⁴ The Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit (RAGU) at London Metropolitan University provides specialist careers advice and guidance as well as employability training for all refugee health professionals <https://www.londonmet.ac.uk/services-and-facilities/refugee-assessment-and-guidance-unit/>

²⁵ Specialist Employability Support is intensive support and training to help people into work if they are disabled <https://www.gov.uk/specialist-employability-support>

with refugees needs a good understanding of refugees' needs and backgrounds and to be well-qualified or experienced in their area of expertise. In addition, staff should have strong intercultural competence and experience of holistic advice and person-centred practice. Good practice is to work alongside refugees rather than to 'do to'. Working in this way, ensures that refugees can access and benefit from mainstream provision and receive effective and good quality advice and support which is sensitive and responsive to their needs. Involving refugees in the design and delivery of services, such as through Refugee-led Community Organisations (for more about RCOs see 'Joined-up working' below) can help to ensure that services are well informed, needs led and culturally appropriate.

Intercultural competence and effective intercultural working

Intercultural competence enables staff in different roles to interact effectively and in a way that is acceptable to others when they are working with people who have different cultural backgrounds. 'Cultural' may denote all manner of features, including the values and beliefs you have grown up with, your national, regional and local customs and, in particular, attitudes and practices that affect the way you work.²⁶

The National Standards for Intercultural Working developed in 2008, defined effective intercultural working as 'working with people from different countries or diverse cultures in ways that promote open and respectful interaction, better understanding and improved performance'²⁷. The standards describe effective intercultural working as leading to:

- better communication,
- mutually respectful and supportive working relations,
- increased productivity,
- improved customer service,

Developing intercultural competence is an ongoing, reflexive process that considers how attitudes, skills and knowledge can promote inclusion and equality. It involves the need to:

- be sensitive to a person's behaviour, body language or tone of voice,

²⁶ This definition is from the INCA project <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/librarydoc/the-inca-project-intercultural-competence-assessment>

²⁷ CILT (Centre for Information for Language Teachers) developed a set of National Occupational Standards for Intercultural Working in the UK. CILT, 2008, p. 2. NB. CILT no longer exists.

- be interested in how people may be feeling or perceiving a situation,
- be reflective and insightful to appreciate how they may be perceived by others,
- be able to change how they do things in response to these insights.

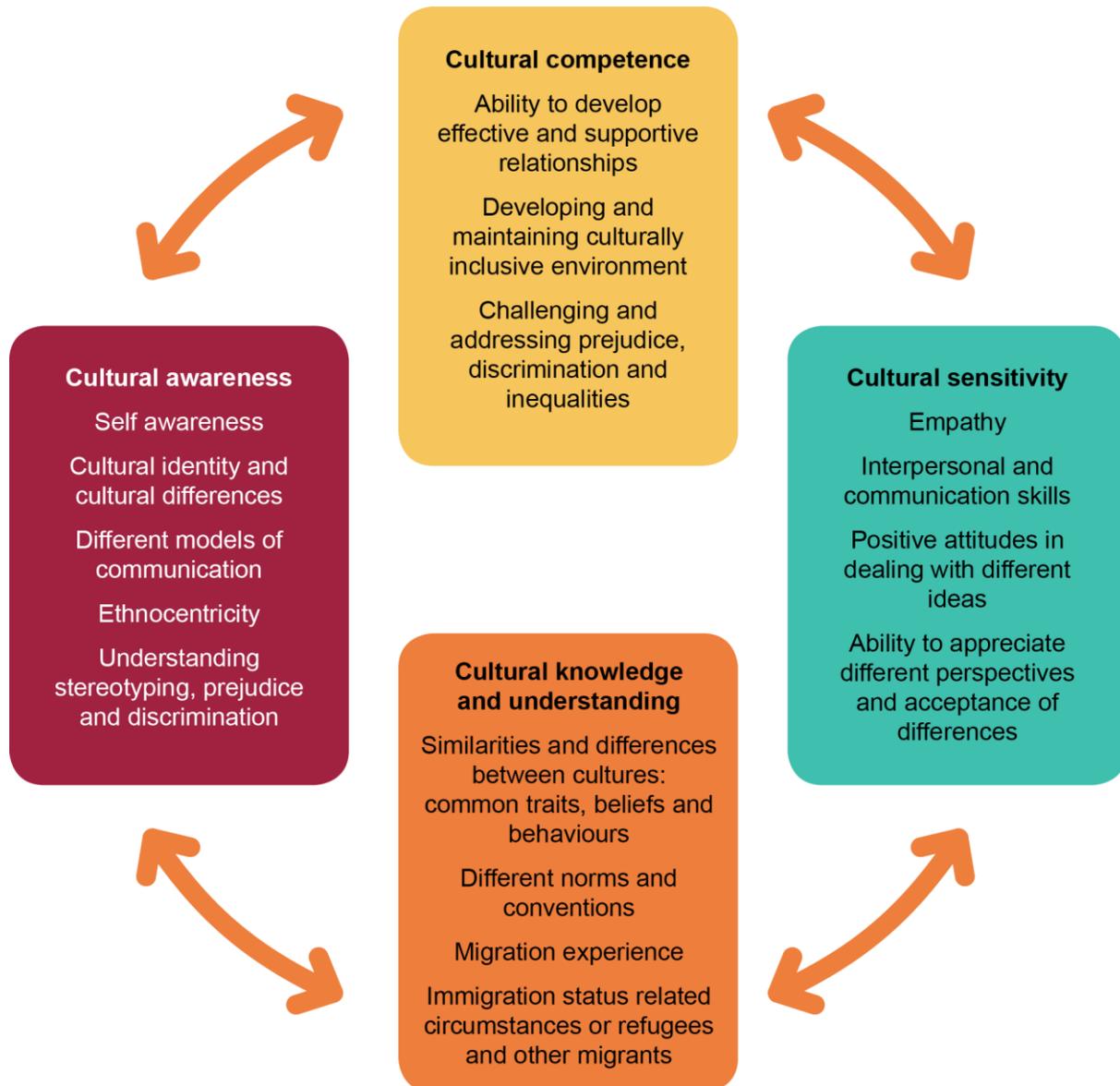
Developing intercultural competence typically involves evaluation of and building on other competences to reflect the intercultural working context. For example, 'communication' is a competence that most organisations expect of their staff and this may or may not include competence in intercultural communication. It is within an intercultural or cross-cultural context that these competencies become intercultural competencies. Emphasising the intercultural aspect of competence is necessary to highlight the additional sensitivities and skills required to work effectively in a culturally diverse setting.

There are different models for developing intercultural competence and although some models have been specifically developed for a particular work sector, they can be adapted to reflect different sectors and settings. Most models include the four dimensions of intercultural competence: Knowledge, Attitudes or Sensitivity, Skills, and Awareness. Figure 1 is based on two models, one for health care professionals²⁸ and one for adult educators²⁹; it depicts the reflexive, ongoing process of developing intercultural competence.

²⁸ The Papadopoulos, Tilki and Taylor Model for Developing Cultural Competence
<http://ieneproject.eu/download/Outputs/intercultural%20model.pdf>

²⁹ Lopacinska, L. (2009) Intercultural toolkit for Adult Educators
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303736060_Intercultural_toolkit_for_Adult_Educators

Figure 1: Modified model for developing cultural competence



Initial assessment - English language³⁰

Critical to understanding learners' English language learning needs at all levels is professional initial assessment, which in itself can help to set people off in the right direction and prevent later misunderstandings or learners becoming disheartened and demotivated through having their expectations raised unrealistically. The dialogue which takes place around an initial assessment can help to reassure learners with little or no experience of formal education or encourage those who are lacking confidence to learn. This process is particularly important for new arrivals at the pre-entry level.

The 'How to guide'³¹ on commissioning ESOL explains why it is vital for refugees who need to learn English to be assessed³² in a professional and helpful way, so that they can understand which level of English they are offered and why they are being recommended to a particular group, class or type of provision. It is well understood that ESOL is key to gaining paid work. While this is not always true, (e.g. mono-lingual groups of agricultural workers), it is likely that with the current system of dispersal, Arabic-speaking workplaces are unlikely to occur frequently.

The initial assessment for those who have very little English is particularly important. It assesses the level across the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing and identifies where the learner is in relation to Entry Level 1 with respect to each skill. Learning providers can carry out this assessment. They can then advise an appropriate level of English programme and, if the learner has wider learning needs, how those needs might be met. This can help to focus learning and/or support on a particular skill or specific needs to enable progression from Pre-entry Level.

Access to Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) and vocational learning at the appropriate level is needed alongside this. Consideration must be given as to how best to provide both initial assessment and advice/guidance to someone with very low English language skills. Engaging interpreters and other support people is essential to assist this process. Group assessments are not appropriate at this level as learners' unfamiliarity with the process and stigma associated with the lack of literacy in particular, may not reveal the actual needs. Learners who have low levels of literacy need to be identified early. They may become stressed and anxious if faced with a reading task. IAG at this level needs to include information about the level of ESOL required to progress into different non-ESOL learning and other opportunities.

³⁰ Pre-entry ESOL: A Factsheet for the South East Region <http://www.secouncils.gov.uk/about-us/about-sespm/sespm-research/>

³¹ How to Guide – Commissioning ESOL for Refugees in the South East of England available on <http://www.secouncils.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ESOL-How-to-guide.pdf>

³² This is recognised in the government Guidance

The provider of this assessment and any related advice must act as an 'honest broker' and refer to the most suitable provider, not just into the programmes and classes which they have available. A partnership or hub approach across providers works most effectively.

One of the outcomes of the initial assessment and any guidance offered around learning may be the development of Learner Agreements or Individual Learning Plans (ILPs). For new arrivals these may need to be developed over the course of more than one session. These also serve to ensure that the learner understands the process as this may be very unfamiliar to anyone from another country.

Initial assessment - vocational qualifications and experience

Just as for language assessment, it is important to support the refugee through an understanding of how what they have achieved previously can be adapted to 'fit' their new circumstances. For this to be achieved, advisers and coaches, teachers and supporters may need to understand the cultural contexts in which refugees' prior qualifications and experiences were gained and to be able to help refugees explore the differences and similarities so that they are better prepared for the expectations of the UK labour market. More details for skills and vocational initial assessment are given below.

Recognition of prior achievement

Part of initial and ongoing assessment must include efforts to recognise, formally or non-formally, the achievements that a refugee has gained within their life prior to arriving in the UK. Shared understanding of the key terms and concepts is useful in the process:

- A qualification is the hard outcome of a process of learning/study which might be achieved by examination or other assessment method,
- Assessment is the process by which a judgement of achievement is made,
- Accreditation is the term used to describe programmes through which qualifications can be gained but is also used to refer to a recognised learning provider,
- Recognition in this context is used to signify formal recognition of qualifications gained in other countries, but could also refer to less formal comparison of previous qualifications and work experience.

The following are two possible processes for recognition of prior achievement: APEL and RARPA.

APEL (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning) is a process by which applicants or learners can have their previous achievements or work experience assessed either to enable access to a learning programme with other than the mainstream agreed qualifications required (e.g. A level equivalents which are not formally recognised from another country being used as valid access for Higher Education).

RARPA³³ (Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement) is the process to measure the progress and achievement of learners on non-accredited learning programmes.

All education and learning providers should be able to offer APEL and/or RARPA within their work.

Accessing careers advice and other information, advice and guidance

Careers advice can be critical in achieving good outcomes and with the National Careers Service now often co-located with Jobcentre Plus, refugees claiming benefits will be able to access their services but will need good English or some language support to be able to make the best use of this. Although slightly dated, there are some good resources³⁴ available, which can easily be adapted by careers professionals and other professionals. The resources include skills audit and career action planning tools focused on supporting refugees and other new arrivals.

Most refugees are unfamiliar with what language and other learning opportunities may be available to them, how to access courses and employment, or how to begin the process of re-establishing their professional careers. The importance of access to appropriate information, advice and guidance is further emphasised by recognising that refugees' social networks are also likely to be limited in the support that they can offer.

Research³⁵ has found that the information and advice is either not available or that it is inadequate: refugees are offered learning that does not match their needs, they are directed towards jobs that are typically low skilled and are not in any way a reflection of their skills or aspirations and their potential is undermined. Even when refugees are able to produce evidence of qualifications gained prior to arrival in the UK, they find that they are not valued or properly assessed. Refugees who were

³³ Learning and Work Institute website contains Updated RARPA Guidance and Case Studies <http://www.learningandwork.org.uk/resource/updated-rarpa-guidance-and-case-studies/>

³⁴ See the 'Resources' section at the end of this guide

³⁵ For example, Tip, K.L., Morrice, L., Collyer, M. & Brown, R. (2016). Policy Briefing: ESOL for formerly resettled refugees in England. ESOL policy and delivery mechanisms. <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=policy-brief-on-language.pdf&site=252>

successful in accessing employment were proactive and seeking courses in addition to those accessed via initial support that were provided specifically for refugees. Refugees can become disappointed and frustrated when there are limited opportunities to learn English and find access to routes to employment.

There is a low level of experience of providing IAG to refugees amongst advisers in the FE sector, that compounds the refugees own lack of understanding of the education systems and how to go on about accessing different opportunities. Clear guidance is needed for all, for learning providers and asylum seekers and refugees to explain their entitlements and offer appropriate progression routes. The refugee specific initiatives and projects, such as Refugee Council and Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit project for health professionals or Transitions London initiative³⁶, highlight both, the potential of the specialist support to progress refugees into employment and the complexity of the barriers that they face in the process.

All those providing advice and support to refugees may need to bear in mind the need for flexibility. Once refugees learn more about the UK labour market, they may change their mind about their eventual destination/career outcome. Sometimes they may undertake training in a specific area of work and then realise it is not the right choice for them. Equally they may have to reconsider the options, as their aspiration may just not be achievable or even exist in the UK. This may be a difficult situation to manage and can require working alongside well-trained and qualified careers professionals.

Part of the IAG process with refugees includes the comparison and, if possible, recognition of qualifications, skills and experience gained before coming to the UK. Initial assessments and further advice and guidance work can be used extensively in this regard.

National Careers Service

The National Careers Service in general (not just through JobCentre Plus) is available for refugees but it is important to bear in mind that new arrivals may need interpreting support to help them access the services which are available online, by phone and face to face. There are some skilled advisers working in learning providers and in the voluntary and community sector.

Advisers of all kinds working with refugees are likely to be familiar with skills auditing processes tailored for refugees and also with UK NARIC³⁷. Advisers are likely to also be fully aware of the requirements for regulated professional re-orientation such as

³⁶ <https://transitions-london.co.uk/whats-the-problem-looking-for-work-as-a-refugee-professional/>

³⁷ UK NARIC is the designated UK national agency that provides a service that compares qualifications gained in other countries to UK qualifications <https://www.naric.org.uk/naric/>

for doctors, other medical professionals, legal professionals, teachers and so on. Some of these professions have specific procedures to follow, and also have a standard of English which must be achieved (IELTS).

Advisers working with refugees may need to be careful to manage expectations; it is not always or even frequently possible to enable a re-orientation within someone's existing profession.

Skills auditing

A skills audit is a process by which advisers and support workers can explore and record an individual's skills, qualifications and experience. The process involves one to one interviews between an adviser and a person during which the adviser asks a series of questions relating to the person's education, training, work experience or life experience which involved acquiring skills. This may require a number of meetings and additional telephone and/or email communication. The process, which may take some time to complete, generates a detailed record of a person's past achievement that can then form a firm foundation from which the adviser can support refugees to identify which of their qualifications they may wish to compare/assess and to develop career action plans.

Typically, skills audit models aimed at refugees and other migrants include a process of getting to know, discussing and recording. In practice, this process relies on a combination of answering specific questions and on an exploratory dialogue to obtain and record information within a recording framework. Examples of such skills audit models and recording frameworks are the EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals³⁸ or Asset UK Skills Audit for Asylum Seekers and Refugees³⁹: further information about these and other approaches to skills auditing is in the Tools/Resources section at the end of this guide.

The diagram of the Skills Audit Methodology presented below (Figure 2), illustrates different stages and activities involved. Although presented as a linear process, in practice this is not always the case. Finding out about prior experiences and learning relies on effective communication, trust and creative ways of supporting refugees to remember and recount the information. This may be particularly relevant when looking to identify skills and experiences that fall outside of formal education and

³⁸ EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1412&langId=en>

³⁹ Asset UK Skills Audit for Asylum Seekers and Refugees: A practitioners' manual (2005) NIACE.

The skills audit methodology specifically developed to support asylum seekers and refugees into education, training and employment. The methodology is relevant although some resources and references within the manual may be out of date. <https://www.learningandwork.org.uk/resource/skills-audits-for-asylum-seekers-and-refugees-a-practitioners-manual/>

employment (see Life CV approach below). Conducting skills audit over a number of sessions helps to build trust and improves communication and going over information already recorded may reveal misunderstandings and mistakes that can then be corrected.

Skills assessment and validation

If a refugee is to be able to effectively apply for work or further training, it is important for them to be able to specify their level for different types of skills that employers and training providers may ask about during an application/recruitment process. The types of skills employers are likely to want to know about are:

- language skills,
- occupational language skills,
- vocational skills,
- general IT skills,
- occupational IT skills,
- employability skills,
- numeracy skills.

Where these are not clear, it is helpful to find a means of identifying skills levels from a refugee's qualifications or descriptions of their work experience. Some assessment tools may already be readily available to the adviser or within organisations to which the adviser can refer the refugee; for instance, language and numeracy assessments. However, vocational skills assessments are rare and those that do exist may be inappropriate for people with English language needs. Furthermore, the specialist nature of vocational skills assessments makes them unlikely to be known to a generic employment service adviser and it can take some time to find a vocational specialist to confirm if a suitable assessment tool/opportunity is available or not.

During the European Social Fund Equal Progress GB Upskill project, a website-based vocational skills assessment to assess accounting technician skills at foundation and intermediate level was available on the Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) website. As a result of undertaking this assessment, clients were more likely to take up accountancy training and seek employment at an appropriate level for them (this process can be seen illustrated on page 37).

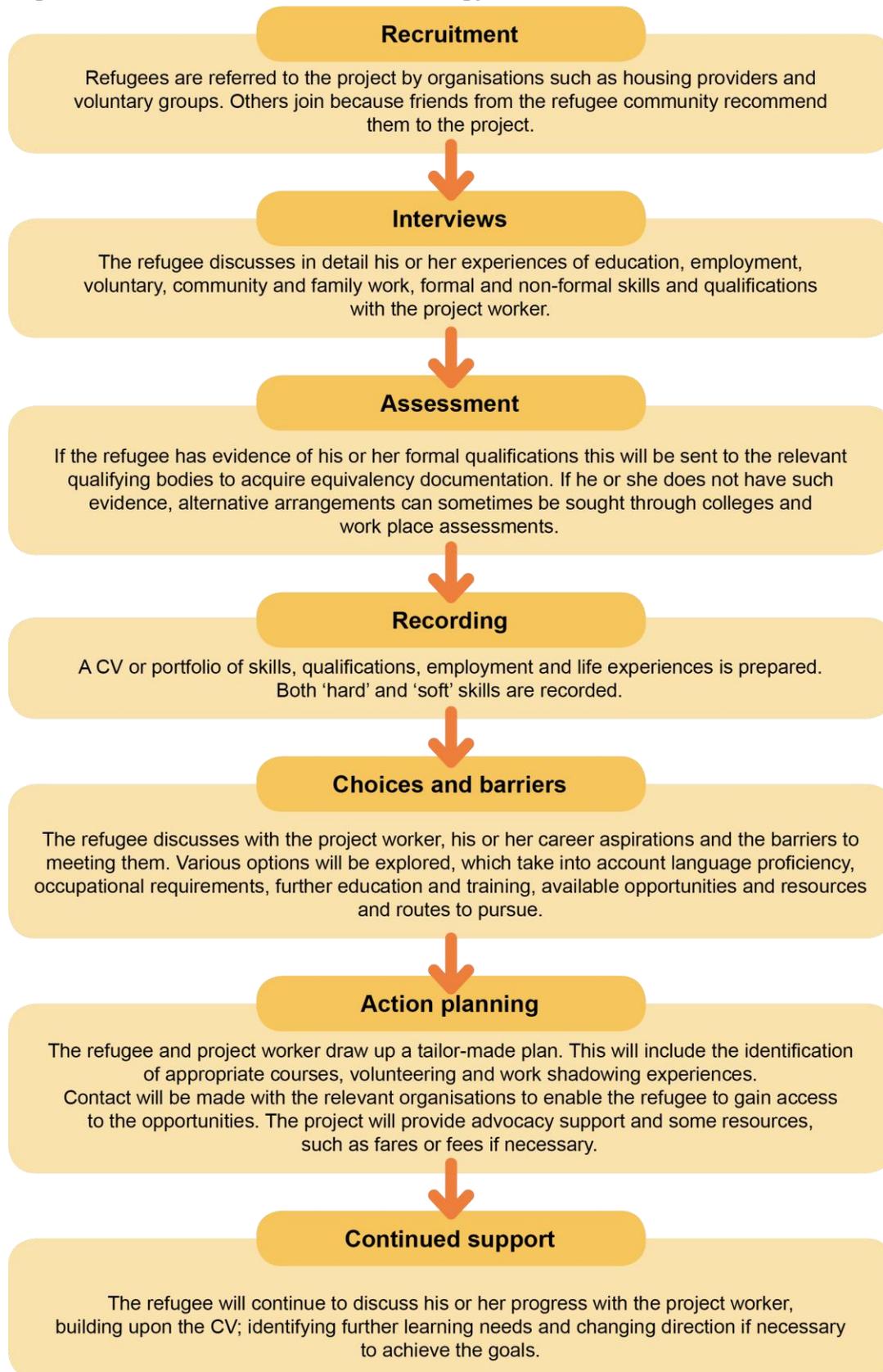
The nature of some skills is difficult to assess using tests, especially skills such as employability skills normally evidenced through descriptions of work experience or references. Where a refugee has no references or an adequate record of their previous work experience, it can be helpful to arrange a short period of work experience in which they can demonstrate their skills. The provider of a work experience can then provide a detailed reference on the capacity of the individual to undertake different aspects of their role. The demonstration and verification of skills in this way is called skills validation.

Albeit challenging and time-consuming to arrange, assessment or validation of skills can make a significant difference to the outcomes for a refugee. Due care is needed when undertaking assessment to avoid confusion and mistakes due to language and cultural differences. Ideally, both a language teaching specialist and a vocational specialist trained in the use of assessment tools would be present when assessments are carried out. Revealing the results of assessments requires great sensitivity, if the results are lower than the refugee expects, as the impact and implications on their future hopes and aspirations can be profound.

Figure 2 shows the activities included in a skills audit process. It is an adapted version of a diagram originally developed by NIACE⁴⁰.

⁴⁰ NIACE (2005) Asset UK Skills Audit for Asylum Seekers and Refugees: A practitioners's manual. <https://www.learningandwork.org.uk/resource/skills-audits-for-asylum-seekers-and-refugees-a-practitioners-manual/>

Figure 2: The skills audit methodology



Getting recognition for qualifications

Refugees who have qualifications from their home country or other countries and wish to use them to progress into work or further study will need support to have their qualifications compared to UK qualifications. The assessment of prior educational experience, and facilitation of the recognition of qualifications from other countries, is important to inform refugees' career orientation and access to employment and further study.

UK NARIC⁴¹ is the designated UK national agency that compares qualifications gained in other countries to UK qualifications. UK NARIC has made a significant positive impact, but UK employers can still find these qualifications unfamiliar and are cautious in recognising them as being equal in comparison to an equivalent UK qualification; particularly as overseas qualifications are often derived from quite dissimilar education systems to that in the UK, and are therefore naturally in a different format. Unfortunately, employers are not obliged to recognise the documentation, usually a 'statement of comparability', that results from the UK NARIC service. This is equally true of valid certificates of any sort, but employers may, often unjustifiably, use the existence of a non-UK qualification to reject an application especially in a competitive labour market.

An adviser can help refugees to seek recognition for their qualifications by initially identifying the equivalent qualification using the UK NARIC database and then helping them to gather the documentation required to be sent to UK NARIC, such as the original certificates and qualification transcripts.

Professional recognition, re-training and up-skilling

If refugees are already qualified to work in a profession it may be possible to gain recognition for that qualification. The Centre for Professional Qualifications (CPQ) (related to NARIC) covers all aspects of professional qualifications recognition including provision of advice and guidance to professionals, employers and other stakeholders.

In addition to CPQ, there is some information available aimed at refugees who would like to try to pick up their original profession in the UK from a range of other sources, such as professional bodies or projects and websites that are involved in supporting refugees through the process. For example:

⁴¹ UK NARIC <https://www.naric.org.uk/naric/>

- Health and Care Professionals Council who regulate a range of health, social work and psychological professions provide information about requirements for applicants who have completed professional training outside the UK⁴².
- Information from the Refugee Council: Refugees into Teaching webpage⁴³ and the government website⁴⁴, suggests that requalification is currently the main route for refugees who arrive with teaching qualifications, to obtain Qualified Teacher Status.
- The Refugee Journalism Project⁴⁵ from the London College of Communication aims to help migrant journalists gain access to the British media industry. The project is working in partnership with other organizations to widen the reach beyond London.

Both the requirements and the opportunities can change (many projects are limited in their reach and are often short lived) it is important to ensure that the information is up to date before using it as basis for career plans and activities.

Career action plans⁴⁶

The purpose of developing an action plan is to map out a viable route from a client's starting position to eventual employment. The action plan will consider the short, medium and longer term plans and will identify the most convenient, affordable and effective means to address a person's needs and preferences. When action planning, it is important to consider the individual's personal circumstances such as caring responsibilities, health, finance and other issues that might affect their ability to pursue a course of action.

Normally, an action plan will describe how someone can go from their starting position to skills they need to secure the employment to which they aspire. It is helpful to begin with listing the skills they need to secure this employment. This is because these skills will determine the gaps and areas that need to be developed. This can include vocational skills, language skills, job awareness and job search

⁴² Health and Care Professionals Council <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/registration/getting-on-the-register/international-applications/>

⁴³ Refugee Council: Refugees into Teaching
https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/refugees_into_teaching

⁴⁴ The Department for Education <https://getintoteaching.education.gov.uk/explore-my-options/overseas-applicants>

⁴⁵ The Refugee Journalism Project <http://migrantjournalism.org/2018/08/06/we-are-looking-for-new-participants-for-our-project/>

⁴⁶ This section has been adapted from the Advising third-country nationals. A training resource for EU Employment and Careers Services (IMPACT project/NIACE)
https://esol.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/NIACE%20advising_third-country_nationals-1.pdf

needs. It is important that the information about the skills required for an individual to secure employment to which they aspire is the most recent and relevant available. It can come from the National Careers Service resources, job vacancies and professional bodies/organisations.

Like skills auditing, action planning can also be approached as a learning opportunity for refugees to understand the nature of UK employment, education and social systems and to identify how UK perspectives may differ from their cultural perspective.

Most progression is not likely to be linear and most action plans will require progress to be made simultaneously in a number of areas. Ideally, activities will synchronise well so that a gap being addressed in one skill does not hold back progress in another. Language needs may have to be addressed before vocational skills adaptation activities can be taken up. For instance, it may not be possible to start a vocational training course until an appropriate and/or required level of English has been achieved. For the plan to be effective, it is important that the refugee can see the whole pathway to their ultimate employment aim and not just a short action plan, which stops at the end of time spent with their adviser. Ensuring that a refugee is involved in the development of the action plan can help them to have an understanding and ownership of the plan and to take it forward independently or share it with other advisers.

Advisors may be aware that career action plans need to be regularly reviewed. As people gain better understanding and insight (through activities such as work experience or mentoring) they are able to make better informed career choices. This can lead to minor or more significant changes in their initial choices and preferences and their action plans will need to be adjusted to reflect this.

Figure 3 shows an example of a career action plan, adapted from a plan developed by NIACE for Advising for Adaptation⁴⁷. It is followed by two further examples (Figures 4 and 5), based on more recent refugee stories.

⁴⁷ A Guide to Personal Adviser Mediated, IAG, Careers and Skills Adaptation Support for Migrants and Refugees (2007) NIACE.

Figure 3: An example of a career action plan to help a refugee with some experience in accounting who wishes to adapt accountancy technician skills to work in the UK

Starting point: skills profile from skills audit	Adaptation activities				Skill levels required by the employment aim
	Year 1 ¹	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	
Timeline	→	→	→	→	Working in accounting at technician level during year 4 ²
ESOL – currently Entry Level 1	Achieve Entry Level 2 →	Achieve Entry Level 3 / Level 1 →	Working towards Level 2 →	Achieve Level 2 →	Should continue to develop English skills if possible. Employers will expect a good level of English for this work
Basic education: Maths at Level 2 equivalent. Completed school to 16	Top up Maths or other basic skills – familiarise UK vocab etc				Good Maths at least to Level 2 and preferably higher
Vocational training – currently at approx Level 2 equivalent ³	Take AAT Skillcheck test. www.aat.org.uk (Needs English at Level 1) →		Start to study for and complete AAT qualifications at Levels 2 or 3 →	Achieve AAT Level 3 and start to work towards Level 4 →	Book keeping and accountancy. Level 4 required for employment at technician level
Previous work experience – some accounting and book-keeping experience in a small business setting			Start doing some book-keeping or similar		Some work experience if possible
Occupational IT – currently not UK equivalent			Sage Level 1 →	Sage Level 2 →	Sage Level 2 or equivalent

General IT skills – good personal use – probably at Level 1	Do a WEA-type basic digital skills course ⁴ →	Do an ECDL course or equivalent to demonstrate IT skills ⁵ →		Good IT skills
Little familiarity UK workplace	Take up any volunteering or other experiences →		Completion of work experience placement in administrative settings ⁵ →	
Occupational awareness – none in UK context			Gain AAT membership →	Attend AAT branch meetings →
Job search 1	Basic job search skills training →	Take a volunteering placement or non-related job opportunity →		
Job search 2		Further career advice →	Further support with job search skills →	Individual job search →

Notes

1. By Year 1, we mean from starting this process, so Year 1 starts after initial resettlement and early information, advice, guidance etc.
2. It can take a long time for a refugee to progress to the desired job outcome. This may not be supported by current benefits rules or other demands, nor on the desire of the refugee to start working and earning soon. It is hard for someone to maintain a long term goal while having to take up other work for example, so support is needed from the relevant agencies and institutions and the individual's adaptability is also key – people may change their mind during this process, especially if they suffer setbacks or the world of work in the UK is different from what was expected.
3. AAT qualifications are not free to achieve. The refugee may need some support with this process. A College might be one way to work towards these qualifications which are also available online. Check that the refugee is using the AAT official website.
4. Courses of this type are available from a range of providers so the suggestions in this diagram are suggestions for example only.
5. Requires ESOL Level 1 to do.

Figure 4: An example of a skills adaptation action plan for a refugee looking to adapt their skills to work in a garage as a motor mechanic

Starting skills profile	Adaptation activities			Skills levels required by the employment plan
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	
Timeline				
Pre-entry Level English	Attend Pre-entry ESOL programme →	Attend ESOL →	Attend ESOL →	Needs to reach Level 1 but this timescale may be too optimistic Level 2 would be desirable to make really good progress at work
Previous 7 years work experience as a motor mechanic in Syria	Career advisor →	Look into re-training or apprenticeship if eligible →	Start work →	Some recognition if only via CV or prior work experience
Vocational skills: Motor mechanic qualifications	Support for recognition of existing skills →	Look into re-training as needed →	Start training →	Must be qualified to UK standards
Basic IT skills	May learn some IT skills within ESOL →	Look for embedded IT training with motor mech skills? →		Will be in a position to learn more 'on the job' if successful
Little familiarity UK workplace	Seek some work experience ¹ as soon as language skills permit			Gain a job or apprenticeship
No health and safety training or experience in the UK		Training or apprenticeship should include H&S		Employers recognise achievement (or provide training)
Job search 1		Start job application / CV preparation		
Job search 2			Apply for jobs / apprenticeships / training places ²	

1. This will need support from key workers/personal adviser or similar
2. This will need considerable support. Motor mechanics are often employed in quite small businesses. And most apprentices in this area may be younger. Advisers could perhaps build up a series of positive relationships with local small businesses to get placements and then positions.

Figure 5: An example of a skills adaptation action plan for a refugee looking to adapt their skills starting from a low level of English and few previous experiences of education or work. Longer term aim to work in adult social care

Starting skills profile	Adaptation activities			Skills levels required by the employment plan
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	
Timeline				
Pre-entry Level English ¹	Attend Pre-entry ESOL programme →	Attend ESOL →	Attend ESOL →	Varies according to job but Entry Level 2 / Entry Level 3 would usually be minimum
Little previous work experience Had done some retail and some hospitality work in family owned businesses	Don't start job search yet if possible ² →	Develop career action plan with advisor / interpreter May find more schooling and experience than previously suggested →	Continue support work with personal advisor / career coach →	No language requirements and no prior experience needed
IT skills – can operate smart phone to an extent. Few work related IT skills	Will learn some IT skills by being part of ESOL training 'classroom' →	Look for embedded IT with ESOL? →	Consider IT course →	More able to use IT – IT skills increase in parallel with language
Few / no vocational skills and no vocational qualifications			Start to look for care work/care qualification, if employer willing to train ³	Longer term could do care quals but not until reaching Level 1 or Level 2 ESOL. Working towards care qualifications
No UK workplace familiarisation		Start small amount of volunteering in care sector →	Start work placement →	As language improves can do more and will become more familiar with UK work and workplaces
Job search 1		Start small scale job application / CV preparation		Basic job search skills

Job search 2	<p>Look for 'interim job' (not in desired sector but commensurate with language other skills)⁴</p> <p>Example might be cleaning, washing up etc</p>	<p>Improved job search skills</p> <p>Improved UK workplace familiarity</p> <p>Perhaps increased language practice depending on the job</p>
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1. This timeline might be a little optimistic for this 'case' example.
2. This will depend on good partnership and relations with local benefits officers/work coaches etc.
3. This is unusual but it may be possible – especially with a national shortage of care workers and impending new training opportunities or apprenticeships.
4. Unfortunately it would not be unusual for the refugee to become 'stuck' in this job particularly if working means reduced or no attendance at ESOL or any other education or community activity. It is important to try to maintain a support relationship to continue to develop career planning and English skills.

Profile of refugees arriving through VPRS and referral to appropriate services

Refugee experience is associated with adversities that create and/or exacerbate vulnerability. This can relate to their experience prior to leaving their country, during the journey and after the arrival in the UK. By its design, the VPRS prioritised vulnerable individuals including older people, disabled people and victims of sexual violence and torture. It is therefore inevitable that there are a high number of refugees with complex needs within the VPRS and that these needs will have an impact on accessing employment. This will need to be explored with individuals and taken into consideration when providing information, advice and support towards employment. This may include exploration of cultural attitudes and expectations relating to employment and factors such as age, health, gender and disability and raising awareness of opportunities. It may require a longer-term engagement and planning, and involvement (through signposting, referrals and joint working) with different professionals and organisations. For example, this can include a range of health and social care providers from GPs, occupational therapists or trauma counsellors, disability and carers' organisations and other mainstream and specialist organisations and services.

Being able to access refugee specific and/or specialist support related to health, mental health, trauma, disability and related problems is likely to be a barrier in itself, as availability varies from one area to another and where the support is available it is likely to be overstretched and oversubscribed. The Government Migrant Health Guide provides a useful advice and guidance on the health needs of migrant,

including refugees. Although aimed at healthcare practitioners it is accessible and useful for wider audience and contains a list of resources including refugee specific agencies' websites⁴⁸. Whilst the employment support/career plan can take into account other needs, the employment related activities such as ESOL and job search may need to run in parallel with other support such as medical care and counselling.

It has already been mentioned in this guide that effective employment support for refugees should be holistic and consider a wide range of needs. This is more easily achieved through partnership working with a range of other agencies and providers. Most of these partnerships will be local, such as with the Jobcentre Plus, a volunteer bureau, education providers or refugee support agencies, including refugee-led community organisations. Regional and national partnerships (for example with employers, the Refugee Council or professional bodies) are also important.

It is important to know other agencies' remit and limitations, their ways of working, and their signposting and referral processes and procedures to ensure that refugees receive a good response. If the adviser has an existing working relationship with the provider, they will be in a better position to signpost and refer their clients. If this is not the case, the adviser may need to support the client more closely.

In some areas there are forums that bring together a range of agencies that are working with refugees and these are useful for getting to know who is doing what and the key contacts within each agency. This can help to avoid refugee clients being turned away or being sent from one place to another. Formal partnerships are useful as they may include shared records and maximise the use of resources.

Life CV

Any provision of information, advice and guidance needs to reflect the complexity of the lived experience of the refugee client and practitioners are encouraged to take a creative and innovative approach to meet the needs of refugees more appropriately. While formal advice from the NCS is useful, it is often a good idea for advisers/mentors/tutors to have another tool to hand to help them be more effective in supporting refugees. One of these would be the concept of the Life CV, which can work well alongside the skills auditing process, described above on page 33.

The 'life CV' process includes a whole life approach to finding out about and recording skills and experiences, not limited to those gained through education and/or work opportunities and settings. The process looks at activities in different life domains (e.g., work, family, community) and the experience of a refugee journey to

⁴⁸ Public Health England (2017) Mental health: migrant health guide
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-migrant-health-guide>

and of living in a new country, cultural cross-cutting, language adaptation and other transitions. The skills and experiences gained through these activities and experiences are related to employability and can be used to create an alternative, 'life' CV and to add to/revise a 'traditional' CV in which the client presents their experience to potential employers and learning providers. The process can encourage refugees to adopt a different, often more positive, view of their experiences and crucially, be able to reframe the way that they present their skills in their efforts to secure employment and other related opportunities.

Employment or job-search support workshops

Many of the activities covered in this Guide can be introduced through workshops for groups of refugees. These can be introduced in community settings, alongside ESOL classes or in other forums. Such workshops can usefully explore all the areas where refugees perceive differences between their prior experiences and the UK labour market, work culture and application and interview processes.

Joined-up working

Joined up working between all the relevant individuals and organisations can ensure that a holistic approach can be taken, duplication avoided and better outcomes achieved. There is a risk that refugees can feel constantly assessed - or that they slip through the net and their prior experience or qualifications are not assessed at all. Partnership approaches or single referral points are essential in supporting refugees into work and some organisations are essential for the effectiveness of such partnerships. Key organisations for partnership working are outlined below.

Refugee-led community organisations (RCOs)

Where they exist, RCOs can be consulted and included in any refugee support initiatives as they play an important role in supporting refugees to integrate and in increasing refugee inclusion and participation. RCOs are differently organised groups, networks and associations that vary in size, role, remit and location but overall, their potential to support their communities' members can be strengthened through partnership working with statutory and other providers. Recent Refugee Council report highlights the depth and breadth of services that RCOs provide including the provision of important information and advice, English language classes, support to find employment and activities to improve health and well-being. RCOs are considered to be particularly effective in supporting refugees because of three key assets: reach, insight and solutions. They have the ability to reach refugee

communities as they have contacts, share languages and cultural affinity, and they are trusted⁴⁹.

Jobcentre Plus - career advice, financial understandings and benefit implications

The organisation of provision of Jobcentre Plus services for refugees can vary from one locality to another. If provision is organised in such a way that recognises the specific circumstances and needs of refugees this can have multiple benefits for refugees themselves, the service, other services in the area, the labour market and the wider community. As illustrated in the case study on page 12, the features of such organisation can be:

- Maintaining a single universal work coach for the duration of an individual's claim,
- Co-location with other key services/agencies,
- Working with refugees to maximise their access to existing employment support opportunities such as career advice, English language learning, training, job-search support,
- Working with local agencies to develop opportunities for refugees to receive career advice and training.

A case study below, captures the experience of refugee resettlement support in Ashford, Kent and highlights the following advantages of close and joint working:

- Jointly developing programmes to supporting client group into employment ensures compliance with benefit requirements and regulations,
- Sharing of expertise and knowledge,
- Sharing of local knowledge around existing resources, identifying gaps in provision and exploring ways to fill those gaps.

The following are highlighted risks of not working collaboratively:

- Tension and misunderstandings between Jobcentre Plus and support providers causing stress to both staff and customers,
- Possibility of customers being sanctioned if they have not met work-related benefit requirements.

⁴⁹ Refugee Council (2018) 'A bridge to life in the UK: Refugee-led community organisations and their role in integration' Available at: https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0004/4288/J1609_rc-bridge-to-life-report-FINAL.pdf

Ashford Borough Council Refugee Resettlement Project - Working with the DWP and local partners

From our experience, we cannot emphasise enough the need for close joint working to meet the needs of Jobcentre Plus customers (in this case refugees but applies equally to any customer cohort). Successful outcomes will only be achieved with collaboration and imagination, keeping the needs of each individual at the centre of provision. There is no “one size fits all” solution either for the individual refugees themselves or for the local authorities supporting them. Each local authority supporting refugees will have different resources potentially available to support the resettlement to overcome different challenges.

When Ashford Borough Council (ABC) first committed to accepting families under the VPRS, we fully recognised the need to work closely with partner agencies from the outset, to achieve the most positive outcomes possible for refugees.

Before the first arrivals of in late 2015, DWP centrally had directed DWP regions to appoint a regional lead and local contacts in all Jobcentre Plus offices to facilitate timely benefit claims for arrivals. They also issued guidance notes for regional and local offices dealing with claims.

ABC Refugee Resettlement Project opened a dialogue with our local contacts immediately to talk about how we would manage the initial claim process to be as customer focussed as possible. We met with Jobcentre Plus managers and Job Coaches to talk about expectations for the refugees and how we could jointly support the families to meet requirements for claiming benefits and be supported to access employment opportunities as quickly as possible. This dialogue has been ongoing and developing as the first arrivals progress through their resettlement journey and as new families arrive.

Where some aspects of “usual” Jobcentre Plus processes have not met the needs of this customer group we have worked together to find ways to better support them. For example, Jobcentre Plus require jobseekers to have a CV and offer an appointment with the National Careers Service to create one. It was immediately obvious that a “standard” CV appointment would not be of great benefit for customers who, at the time of that appointment, had very little understanding of English or the way that employment works in the UK. We created a CV workshop in conjunction with National Careers Service. The workshop provided an explanation of the importance of an up to date CV in the UK job market (an idea which was alien to the Syrians, most of whom had never had a CV) and included interpreting support to

help refugees to build a meaningful picture of their skills and experience.

It quickly became obvious that attending ESOL classes provided through mainstream adult education would not, in isolation, accelerate pathways into employment to meet the needs and expectations of the refugees. We worked closely with Jobcentre Plus to discuss what additional support they could offer and how we could provide additional activities that would help the refugees to access employment as quickly as possible whilst remaining within the requirements of the benefit rules.

The development and implementation of the LIST (Language and Industrial Skills Training) in Ashford would have been impossible without close dialogue with Jobcentre Plus. By providing additional support without consultation we would have put refugees at risk of falling foul of benefit regulations and having their benefits sanctioned. We worked to design a programme offering maximum “directed learning” opportunities (ESOL combined with LIST) which were then complemented by other activities which are required of the customer (job search, CV development etc).

Project support workers and Job Coaches keep in close contact to ensure that benefit claims are going smoothly, to discuss ideas and to identify any opportunities that might benefit the customers.

Refugees may need support (alongside that provided by their JCP work coach) to consider how having a job, especially part-time work, short-term jobs or work where there is no guarantee of hours (gig economy), is going to impact on their/their family’s benefits, budgeting, ability to access education and training (time/cost). Whilst there are some online resources that can help with calculating benefits entitlements, for refugees who have little or no experience of living and working in the UK, this may require a referral to a specialist welfare adviser with appropriate language support⁵⁰. The budgeting support may need to extend to understanding how to get best deals with utility costs, how to report faults to the landlord and so on.

The above case study illustrates how joined up working includes other key partnerships highlighted below and how they can be supported by those in refugee resettlement roles.

⁵⁰ See, for example: <https://www.peabody.org.uk/resident-services/benefits-and-budgeting/welfare-benefits-advice> or Citizens Advice Bureaux / local welfare advice providers.

National Careers Service

National Careers Service advisers are often co-located with Jobcentre Plus but are also available through service for adults provided regionally.

The National Careers Service works closely with the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) in its region.

FE Colleges and other learning providers

The main providers of vocational education locally are likely to be Further Education colleges, though some employers have their own provision. Once a reasonable level of ESOL has been achieved, or alongside ESOL if possible, refugees can pick up previous experience to turn it to their advantage in the labour market. Very occasionally ESOL is available embedded within a vocational course.

Unfortunately, due to poor levels of recognition of prior qualification or experience, some people may in effect have to re-do learning that they have already done in order to be able to carry out this same job in the UK.

Employment support providers

Organisations and projects involved in different forms of employment support provision will vary from one area to another. Local Jobcentre Plus and key voluntary sector agencies are a good source of information about local initiatives as well as any inclusion criteria for the provision. Providers can include:

- Non-college apprenticeship providers,
- Private training providers,
- Employer-led training providers,
- Business start-up advice.

Volunteers

Harnessing the willingness/talent of volunteers to support people into employment can take the form of mentoring or befriending. This can be set up through a variety of refugee support or other voluntary organisations. In addition, to support the employability process organisations could consider setting up appropriate 'professional buddying'. Although not likely to work for all, this process matches a migrant with a volunteer from within their chosen sector. It would work particularly well for people intent on re-entering a profession or industry in which they worked in their country of origin.

The mentor/buddy understands the way that the particular industry works in terms of both its recruitment practices and whether and where advertisements are placed.

They will therefore also be able to show refugees how to write an industry specific CV or job application and will be aware of the best places to look for work. This approach can particularly help the 45 and over age group who can be harder to engage with learning English; as it affirms their existing experience, provides a professional topic they are interested in and opportunity to learn about the differences between their prior experience and the UK.

THE (LOCAL) LABOUR MARKET

Career and labour market information

Career and Labour Market Information (LMI) includes information on:

- skills, career pathways and progression routes in the local labour market,
- job applications and interviews,
- educational institutions, courses, qualifications, entry requirements and costs,
- professional bodies,
- employment sectors, employers, jobs, salaries and employment trends,
- jobs, training and apprenticeships,
- job demands and working life,
- financial planning⁵¹.

In this Guide, we are using the term Labour Market Information mainly to refer to the types of jobs available locally, the skills needed to do them and how to gain those skills.

Making sense of labour market information

LMI is a valuable resource for anyone who provides IAG/career guidance in any context⁵² and it is essential in supporting refugees into education, training and employment.

LMI is a complex area and one which is constantly evolving. Becoming familiar with LMI will make it possible to support refugees to work with advisers to make sense of different options and opportunities and inform their short and long-term plans and aspirations regarding employment and other related decisions such as further training or relocation. This can include:

- Skills/qualifications matching – a refugee can find out if it is feasible to return to his/her previous occupation; if the same and/or equivalent occupation exists; the level of demand; any skills improvements that they

⁵¹ https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/sites/default/files/gatsby_benchmark_2.pdf

⁵² Cedefop (2016). Labour market information and guidance. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop research paper; No 55. This publication provides information on LMI integration in guidance processes and how it can be used to empower individuals to find better job matches. https://ec.europa.eu/epale/sites/epale/files/labour_market_information_and_guidance.pdf

need in order to meet the requirements (e.g. based on requirements in current vacancies).

- Alternative options if it is not possible/feasible to get skills/qualifications recognised and or if return to a previous occupation is not likely or possible.
- Support to identify transferable skills that might be developed for another career and to research some of the possible options. This may consider:
 - occupations that are most closely matched to existing skills,
 - work/occupations that a refugee has interest in that were not available in the country of origin,
 - employment that is available and skills/qualifications required and opportunities to develop skills/progress.
- Location specific IAG; can inform onward migration to a location where the employment is more available.

Being new to the UK means that refugees may not know about different jobs/work status (real or perceived) or the rewards available (how much can they earn) and other employment conditions (e.g. pensions, sick pay, holiday entitlement, parental leave). Finding out about and sharing this information is important in the context of providing good employment support for refugees.

LMI can be accessed in different formats and from different sources and whilst there is increasing reliance on internet and social media, other sources such as job fairs, information shared in local forums, professional and personal contacts, local media, radio and newspapers are important and relevant. Whenever possible the information should be free and partnership working with an organisation that already subscribes to LMI resources is a useful way to reduce and/or avoid cost.

Examples of accessing LMI:

- LMI for All⁵³ is an online data portal, which connects and standardises existing sources of high quality, reliable labour market information (LMI) with the aim of informing careers decisions. This data is made freely available via an Application Programming Interface (API) for use in websites and applications

⁵³ LMI for All. <http://www.lmiforall.org.uk/>

- Sacu – Student⁵⁴ offer a range of career resources for schools, colleges and students. Some resources require subscription and/or registration but a good range of resources are free, including career quizzes and occupational information.

Labour market for refugees

Routes to the labour market for refugees are likely to differ depending on a range of factors such as employment sector, employment status, employment contract and similar. This can include:

- Public/private/third sector,
- Employment agencies,
- Enterprise / self-employment,
- Gig economy / zero hours contracts,
- Volunteering.

Refugees are not likely to be familiar with the key differences and their implications for income, work security, work conditions and future career prospects. Those supporting them may need to be familiar with some of the risks associated with the less respectable end of the labour market and help refugees to avoid exploitation.

Public/private/third sector

Refugees need to learn the differences between the types of employer. Advisers can show the differences in expectation and application processes. For example, explaining and discussing situations when CVs are not accepted and why this is the case can help to raise awareness of different types of employers.

Employment agencies

New arrivals will need an explanation of the different methods of acquiring employment, including through agencies. The employment rules tend to be different and particularly new arrivals will need to understand the payment methods, the employment law affecting agencies and the advantages and disadvantages of taking work through this route. Agency staff locally will often agree to participate in job fairs or workshops if they are organised for this or other client groups.

⁵⁴ SACU is an online source of careers information to students, parents and teachers: <https://sacu-student.com/> and https://my.sacu-student.com/sacustudent/f?p=404:44:0::NO::P44_LINE_LENGTH:130

Gig economy / zero hours contacts

Many new arrivals including refugees find it difficult to gain employment by way of a typical paid job. Alongside many others in the labour market, new arrivals are having to develop a different approach to work. The economy now, and particularly the low paid and less high-status jobs which may be what refugees can hope to gain at least initially, are structured within the platform or gig economy, or around 'zero hours' arrangements. Like for some others in the labour market, the gig economy may present opportunities for refugees. Data from forty-eight organisations supporting refugee into employment in the UK, showed that most refugees go into either part-time or zero hours contract work⁵⁵.

Insecurity and financial risks associated with this type of employment can be explored and explained so that refugees can make as informed decisions as possible and understand ways of avoiding and minimising risks involved. Although some of the practices in this area are not legal, it does not mean that they do not exist and that refugees, keen to find work, will not encounter them. As the work is typically based on one-to-one relationships between contractor and contractee, the abuse is more likely to occur and it is harder to monitor. Again, this is a good reason for organising employment support workshops with refugees.

Enterprise / self-employment

The visible presence of migrant-owned enterprises such as different food outlets and shops, demonstrates how refugees can transfer their skills, abilities and motivations into business. Although refugee enterprises are not limited to the more visible ones, this can serve as an inspiration to new arrivals to explore opportunities for starting up their own business more widely as linked to their skills and interest. This may also be their main aspiration especially if this is something they have done before and it is seen as a way that refugees may seek to overcome difficulties in securing employment⁵⁶.

Whilst refugee entrepreneurs' contribution to innovation, economic and social development in the UK is well evidenced⁵⁷, they face the usual challenges of starting up a business which are exacerbated further by cultural differences and the lack of UK-specific knowledge and networks. This can be a disincentive to begin to pursue this option or a reason to give up. As part of career planning with refugees, it is important to draw attention to options for becoming self-employed or setting up a

⁵⁵ The report 'Refugee employment support in the UK' was commissioned by the National Employment Network and presented at the Network launch in February 2019.

⁵⁶ Centre for Entrepreneurship (2018) 'Starting Afresh' Available at: <https://centreforentrepreneurs.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CFE-Migrants-Report-March-2018-WEB.pdf>

⁵⁷ Ibid

small business, explore the legal and financial requirements and signpost them to where help can be obtained locally. Self-employment can be attractive to older refugees, such as those over 45 and also to family groups who perhaps have some prior experience of enterprises. However, the same risks apply and it cannot be assumed that a good level of English isn't needed by at least one member of the proposed enterprise.

Supporting potential refugee entrepreneurs typically involves:

- Developing a business plan and associated research and information,
- Securing finance (such as start-up loans, crowdfunding, employment or from networks),
- Understanding legal requirements regarding registration, tax, employment, health and safety and similar.

Typically, entrepreneurship is associated with risk taking and information about the risks involved may need to be carefully considered. This is one of the reasons why learning about what is involved in starting a business and how to go on about it can take time and involve different activities such as one to one information advice and guidance, training workshops and courses, or business mentoring/buddying schemes.

There are a range of initiatives, local and national that can support prospective entrepreneurs. A starting point in finding what support may be available is through government information⁵⁸. It provides ways of finding local sources of advice and support such as a local 'growth hubs'. For example, South East Business Hub⁵⁹ is provided by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). Another valuable source is the nearest Chambers of Commerce that can provide support with developing and building business potential.

Some business support initiatives are specifically aimed at supporting refugees: The Entrepreneurial Refugee Network (TERN)⁶⁰ is a social enterprise that supports and empowers refugees in the UK to realise their potential, fulfil their aspirations and develop their own businesses.

⁵⁸ Information about advice and financial help from government-backed schemes:

<https://www.gov.uk/business-support-helpline>

⁵⁹ The South East Business Hub provides access to bespoke business support in East Sussex, Essex, Kent, Medway, Southend and Thurrock. <http://www.southeastbusiness.org.uk/>

⁶⁰ The Entrepreneurial Refugee Network (TERN) <http://www.wearetern.org/>

Volunteering

Volunteering is seen as a useful pathway into employment (for refugees as well as for other long-term unemployed people). A well-structured volunteer placement can support employability and/or career progression. However, it is important that refugees (and indeed others) do not become 'stuck' in volunteering placements without getting the support to develop employability and to progress job search.

Enabling refugees to progress quickly from voluntary activity to paid work is critical. Again, partnership working here is vital and will help the refugee use volunteering both to contribute to their society and locality, develop important skills and improve language. Holistic approaches tend to work well and may in the long term encourage volunteers to maintain a volunteering role after they are more settled and have paid work.

Partnerships with good volunteer co-ordinators who structure a proper pathway and work in tandem with ESOL providers would be ideal. However, any volunteering which supports language development, integration and/or community engagement with their own or wider communities, if well-structured and evaluated, can support refugees to develop their own contacts, sense of purpose as well as fostering improved wellbeing.

As well as in general, volunteering can be undertaken in the specific sector that someone is interested in. This can include regulated areas such as health or education so long as the appropriate placements and checks are in place. For example, Skills for Health (the Sector Skills Council for Health for the UK health sector) has produced a useful guide for people advising on the range of volunteering opportunities in the health organisations and how volunteering can support career progression within the sector.

Refugee awareness

Refugees will need to be supported to have a basic understanding of some of the regulations and laws surrounding the workplace in the UK. While some of this can be employer-led as it is job-specific, it is useful for refugees to have access to information about the following areas.

Regulated employment

Some professions are regulated or have minimum entry qualifications/conditions. It can be very disappointing for refugees who have been qualified to do a particular profession to find that their prior experience or qualification counts for nothing in the UK.

Health and Safety

The Health and Safety Executive information regarding employers' responsibilities towards migrant workers (which could include refugees) under the health and safety law highlights the need to consider the extent of English language skills of workers before they start work (especially when working through employment agencies, employment businesses, gang-masters and other labour providers). It states that:

'Although health and safety law doesn't generally require workers to be able to speak English, learning English reduces communication difficulties and has been shown to lead to higher productivity and retention rates, as well as promoting integration outside work. Employers have a duty to provide comprehensible information to workers – this does not have to be in writing, or necessarily in English.'⁶¹

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

Refugees and/or organisations wishing to engage them as employees or volunteers, can request a criminal record check as part of their recruitment process. These checks are processed by the DBS. Establishing if refugees have the right documents and support them through the process is important as well as exploring how to avoid delays in accessing opportunities whilst DBS check is being carried out⁶². The government guidance for employers⁶³ is not specific to refugees but it is useful starting point.

Food Hygiene / Food Safety

Anyone working with food must comply with food regulations⁶⁴. Many courses are available to acquire the necessary certificates and local colleges can support this. Some of these courses are specially targeted at migrant communities, can be delivered in languages other than English or have ESOL embedded within them. Working with local colleges or other approved, specialist providers is the best way forward.

Equality law

Like all UK residents, people who are refugees are protected on the basis of all the characteristics included in the Equality Act 2010. However, refugees may not be aware of the protections offered under the Equality Act and through the Public Sector Equality Duty. Employment support should include support with understanding the

⁶¹ The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is an independent regulator working to prevent work-related death, injury and ill health <http://www.hse.gov.uk/migrantworkers/employer.htm>

⁶² Useful information is available from the Volunteer Centre Sheffield <http://www.sheffieldvolunteercentre.org.uk/involving-refugees-asylum-seeker-volunteers>

⁶³ DBS checks: guidance for employers <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/dbs-check-requests-guidance-for-employers>

⁶⁴ More information can be found at <https://www.food.gov.uk>

relevant protected characteristics: age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships and the duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination in relation to employment issues.

It is also important to ensure that as well as protection from the act, refugees will also be required to uphold it as part of being in a workforce, but, at the same time, they may well see evidence where it is not properly followed. It is useful if workplace preparation includes some information on this area of workplace behaviour.

Employment regulations / Illegal practices

The need to support refugees to understand the impact of the legal framework on employment and employment related activities has been mentioned throughout this guide. For example, it has already been mentioned that people with refugee status are entitled to access employment and training and participate fully to the communities within which they live. Also, as some occupations are protected by law, there is a requirement for refugee professionals to register with relevant competent authorities prior to practicing that profession or to hold specific certificates to work in some sectors such as construction. Equally, refugees have the same protection against discrimination (on the grounds of gender, race, religion and belief, disability, sexual orientation and age) as everyone else.

Employment law regulates the relationship between employers and their employees. Having an insight into what employers can ask of and expect from their employees and what rights individuals have in the workplace can help refugees to understand about discrimination, working hours, data protection, and recruitment, redundancy and dismissal. It is important that legal requirements and protections are highlighted in the process of supporting refugees into employment as and when they become relevant. It cannot be assumed that people from different backgrounds will understand when the requirements are legal, that they may have consequences both as a requirement and a protection. There are some unscrupulous 'employers' who may try to take advantage of vulnerable people; the role of refugee supporters is to try to make sure this does not happen.

There are a range of organisations whose support can be helpful to refugees so they may need to be made aware of their existence. Trades Unions, Citizens Advice Bureaux, other advice and money advice providers and other voluntary organisations locally can support people in the event of things going wrong - and hopefully before they do. Refugees may need some mentoring and support with this even well after they have entered a workplace.

EMPLOYERS' AWARENESS OF REFUGEES

Engaging with employers

Employers may struggle to understand or have confidence in what refugees have to offer to their organisations and businesses. As well as impacting negatively on the opportunities for refugees to access any paid work, commensurate with experience and qualifications or otherwise, the failure to recognise refugees' skills and potential results in a loss of talent and skills to employers. Employers do not tend to have sufficient knowledge of education, qualifications or experience which might have been gained in other countries though there are exceptions, particularly where those employers have also got prior experience elsewhere in the world.

The state of the labour market is the most likely influencing factor on the likelihood of refugees gaining employment; where there are labour shortages, employers might be more willing to employ someone with a refugee background (this is illustrated in the case study below). However, this cannot be assumed. Recent report on engaging employers to improve refugee employment in the UK has found that:

'The primary motivation for employers to engage with refugee employment is the social need – a response to the "refugee crisis". Secondary motivations include reputational benefits, responding to skills shortages, and increasing diversity within the workforce.⁶⁵

The case for employment of refugee healthcare professionals in the NHS organisations is an example of the benefits for employers to meet their requirements in a number of areas, including workforce supply, equality and diversity and corporate social responsibility⁶⁶. Similarly, Starbucks⁶⁷ and IKEA⁶⁸ are working with refugee support organisations to recruit refugees into their workforce.

Like in any other situation, the key to effective partnership working is mutual understanding and dialog. Understanding employer's primary motivation is important for refugee supporting organisations and individuals. It can inform the joint working in a way that sets clear expectations about employers' requirements and refugees'

⁶⁵ Effective Partnerships by Charlotte Gibb (2018) is one of two working papers funded by the Home Office and commissioned by the Refugee Employment Network. The second paper is Refugee Employment Support in the UK has been written by Abigail Tweed (2018) and the second is Effective Partnerships by Charlotte Gibb (2018).

⁶⁶ Information about refugee healthcare professionals initiatives in NHS:

<https://www.nhsemployers.org/your-workforce/recruit/employer-led-recruitment/refugee-healthcare-professionals>

⁶⁷ <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/starbucks>

⁶⁸ <https://breaking-barriers.co.uk/partnerships/corporates/>

requirements (as represented by refugee supporting organisations). Recent research has shown that the 'business case' and the 'social case' are not mutually exclusive.⁶⁹

Raising employer awareness of refugees

Despite some of the best-known British products, such as the Mini Cooper car, and businesses like Marks and Spencer's, being respectively invented or founded by refugees, employers' prejudice towards refugees' skills and knowledge, confusion about their legal status and eligibility to work and lack of flexibility in recruitment practices present a major barrier to refugees' employment. Breaking Barriers identifies social stigmas to be one of the key barriers to refugees' employment. These include:

- Racism and negative stereotyping,
- Cross-cultural misunderstandings that can contribute to misplaced suspicion and hostility,
- Public and workplace perception that additional costs and admin will be required when hiring a refugee⁷⁰.

Building relationships with employers is an essential component of any effort to improve refugee employment. Projects that have done so have reported a high level of employer satisfaction⁷¹. Research has shown that refugees tend to stay with their employers longer than other employees and can also help recruit other dedicated refugees as workers⁷².

Work with employers will need to include an exploration about workforce needs and possible opportunities for employment or employment-related support, and, any barriers or concerns to engaging with and employing refugees. Seven employers who took part in the research commissioned by the Refugee Employment Network⁷³ indicated that refugee support agencies do 'not show enough commercial awareness' and suggested that involving employers from the outset can help avoid problems that can put at risk effective partnership working. The same report also highlights the need for refugee support organisations to have a more coordinated approach to working with employers. This would make it easier for agencies to

⁶⁹ Effective Partnerships by Charlotte Gibb (2018)

⁷⁰ Breaking Barriers supports refugees in London to secure stable and fulfilling employment:

<https://breaking-barriers.co.uk/the-cause/refugee-employment-crisis/>

⁷¹ See Breaking Barriers above and RAGU testimonies from employers

<https://www.londonmet.ac.uk/services-and-facilities/refugee-assessment-and-guidance-unit/what-nhs-employers-say/> and Transitions London <https://transitions-london.co.uk/whats-the-problem-looking-for-work-as-a-refugee-professional/>

⁷² The Tent Foundation <https://www.tent.org/>

⁷³ Effective Partnerships by Charlotte Gibb (2018)

identify employers that are already working with refugee support agencies in different locations. The same should also work with employers who wish to reach refugees in different areas. Another potential benefit of a more coordinated approach would be to identify refugees with specific skills sets and/or aspirations wherever they are and to match there with employers' needs or to make training and other support activities more cost effective.

Addressing employers' concerns can include:

- providing information about refugees' legal entitlements to employment,⁷⁴
- raising awareness of refugees' skills, potential and aspirations,
- arranging different opportunities for refugees and employers to meet including social community events,
- facilitating contact with other employers who employ refugees,
- exploring opportunities for refugees to demonstrate and/or learn new skills before employment – through work experience, shadowing or volunteering,
- providing ongoing, in-work support for refugees and employers.

The following case study from Oxford, illustrates examples from a work based ESOL programme.

⁷⁴ Information about documents that refugees have which demonstrate their entitlement to work in the UK, is in the Refugee Council guide:
https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0003/4097/Employing_Refugees_-_Guide_to_documents_required_Dec_2014.pdf

Oxford City Council VPRS employability initiatives

Since the beginning of 2018, Oxford City Council has engaged in a range of initiatives to support resettled refugees to improve their ESOL skills and employability. They reviewed the progress on an ongoing basis. Lessons learned from initial and ongoing efforts are being used to inform next steps in relation to initial assessment and requirements, the length and the content of provision, and developing relevant partnerships.

Work based ESOL - grounds maintenance for pre-Entry and Entry Level 1 ESOL

The first initiative came about as the council wanted to set up some form of vocational training alongside ESOL learning. The aim was to improve motivation, support progression into accredited ESOL and improve employability for learners who were not moving on from pre-entry ESOL.

The council contacted Aspire, an organisation that supports disadvantaged people in Oxford into employment and works with employers to help fill vacancies. Aspire run a social enterprise where clients gain valuable work experience and move through a structured programme until they are “work ready”. One of Aspire’s requirements for their existing programme was that people should have English at ESOL Entry Level 2 which was too high for the majority of refugees arriving through VPRS. The council and Aspire explored possible pathways for refugees with lower level ESOL including Pre-entry Level. A trial six-week work based ESOL course was set up. It involved two days of classroom-based provision with a scheme of work based around employment and one day of work experience doing grounds maintenance. Oxford City Council provided some interpreter support either through the use of volunteers or paid interpreters.

However it was difficult to recruit to the course from the pre entry group of learners. Only two participants enrolled. The feedback from the participants who joined the course indicated that, although, the classroom ESOL was helpful, they did not practice English in the work experience and were not interested in grounds maintenance work.

It was clear that work experience needs to be relevant for refugees’ interests and aspirations; that expectations need to be managed; that it might be better to have a course focused on those refugees who already had an existing motivation to find work and that refugees required more classroom based ESOL to equip them for work experience.

‘So, we had a complete rethink.’

Work Based ESOL – Customer Service for Entry Level 1-2 ESOL

The council were part of the IOM pilot that used the EU skills profile tool with VPRS refugees. The skills profiling was an opportunity for refugees to share information about their past experience and skills and to talk about what they wanted to do - their employment goals.

Looking at the data for refugees in Oxford the council were aware of the diversity of both, past experiences and future employment aspirations making it difficult to create a work based ESOL course around a particular employment sector. Further considerations identified that ‘customer service’ focused provision can support understanding of the UK work place in different sectors, type of work and levels of employment.

Aspire were commissioned to create a ten-week, one day a week, customer service work-based ESOL programme for people at, and above, Entry Level 1 ESOL.

The participants spent the first five weeks with three hours ESOL around the theme of employment and customer service with a further hour of question and answer session with a local employer.

For the next five weeks the participants spent the morning in the classroom and then three hours in work placements with employers. The work experience included work shadowing and co-working with a designated link worker.

Four local employers participated in the scheme – Oxford bus company, John Lewis, Mid counties Co-op and Brasenose College - all offering different opportunities. This made it possible to consider learners’ preferences and interests when matching with placements (e.g. till work, electrical goods department and so on). Each employer provided experience for two refugees each week, so the refugees were able to complete work experience placements in all four workplaces in pairs.

Prospective learners were invited to an information session at the start of the course where an interpreter was present. In addition, refugees had a one to one session with an adviser at the beginning and end of the course.

Feedback has been much more positive. Learners were positive about their learning and particularly enthusiastic about practical hands on experience and building up of knowledge about the UK workplace. Employers were all contacted by Aspire to give feedback about the scheme in general and on individual learners. The feedback was all positive. Employers were impressed with the learners’ commitment and enthusiasm and suggested that longer work experience period may be more

beneficial.

This initiative further confirmed that refugees' interest in particular activities and topics is an important factor in motivating and sustaining their learning. Programmes that are designed with due consideration for refugees' interests and preferences are likely to be more successful. In this case all learners completed the course with good attendance.

The last one to one advice session focused on exploring next steps i.e. into work, longer work placements, further vocational training or voluntary work. This provided a good insight into other factors that impact on refugees' progression into employment. For example, women who did not see themselves as main breadwinners were less motivated to get into employment quickly. This was in contrast to men and to women who were single parents. Furthermore, good understanding of the impact of employment on welfare benefits is necessary to deal with misinformation and to support individuals to make informed choices.

The Council is in the process of monitoring next steps for each learner. The Council did not commission follow on work from Aspire so communication between Aspire, Council and existing support workers was crucial in terms of building on experience of learners and keeping momentum going. So, for example, sharing the comments from Aspire staff and employers about certain learners who were "job ready" or helping learners to follow up on offers of longer-term work placements has been vital.

All learners reported positive feedback that their conversational English had improved, that they had enjoyed finding out about different job settings and employment opportunities and it had given them information in order to make more informed decisions about what sort of jobs to apply for.

The final IAG session provided both learner and support worker with concrete information to help plan next steps, for example whether the learner was work ready or needed to do some extra voluntary work or ESOL to build confidence and increase language ability.

One learner has had a further meeting with Aspire and the support worker. He has arranged a four-day placement with John Lewis which will help him with application to this employer in future. He has also been working with Aspire on apprenticeship applications to the University which Aspire and support worker will support him with. He is also looking to get longer term work experience in Brasenose College library. The support worker will act as a contact for employer which is crucial in helping employer feel supported.

Broken Spoke

The council worked with Aspire and with a local organisation called Broken Spoke to create opportunities for refugees with pre-Entry level ESOL to improve English language alongside other activities. Refugees were involved in ESOL lessons and in learning how to build a bike along with their ESOL teacher. This 6-week programme took place in the same building.

The programme was designed for refugees who needed support to move on having spent a long time in pre-entry ESOL which had impacted on their motivation and confidence. They were men, mainly in their 40s and in receipt of Employment Support Allowance or JSA. The programme had less emphasis on moving into work and more emphasis on engagement and confidence building. Two out of six people were able to complete the course and they were very satisfied with the learning. Disappointingly, there were four learners who had initially shown interest in the course through the information session but did not complete the course. Two learners were unable to attend for health/caring reasons and one for childcare reasons. Both the ESOL teacher and Broken Spoke were very engaged in making the course accessible to the learners but the two learners who completed the course were the ones with a higher level of English. This emphasised the problem with engaging those who struggle to learn basic English despite having been in the country for over a year.

TOOLS, RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONS

This section is just a selection of the resources and links mentioned in the Guide. Other links can be found in the footnotes.

Advising for Adaptation: A Guide to Personal Adviser Mediated, IAG, Careers and Skills Adaptation Support for Migrants and Refugees (2007) NIACE.

Advising third-country nationals. A training resource for EU Employment and Careers Services (2010) IMPACT project/NIACE. Available as a free download from https://esol.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/NIACE%20advising_third-country_nationals-1.pdf

Asset UK Skills Audit for Asylum Seekers and Refugees: A practitioners' manual (2005) NIACE. The skills audit methodology specifically developed to support asylum seekers and refugees into education, training and employment. The methodology is relevant although some resources and references within the manual may be out of date. <https://www.learningandwork.org.uk/resource/skills-audits-for-asylum-seekers-and-refugees-a-practitioners-manual/>

Business in the Community – BITC have recently published 'Effective Partnerships A report on engaging employers to improve refugee employment in the UK'. They run workshops and webinars for employers on improving refugee employment in the UK <https://www.bitc.org.uk/>

Breaking Barriers is a charity supporting refugees in London to gain the knowledge, confidence and experience to get stable, fulfilling employment. It offers bespoke, intensive and flexible employment support, engaging directly with businesses who provide work experience placements and deliver skills-based workshops for refugees to help with securing long-term employment. Although London-based the methods used by Breaking Barriers and the model of working they suggest would be eminently transferable to other areas/organisations. <https://breaking-barriers.co.uk/>

CARA (the Council for At-Risk Academics) provides help to academics in immediate danger and those forced into exile. It helps individuals to identify further options for work or study in the UK or elsewhere. <https://www.cara.ngo/what-we-do/>

Council of Europe - CoLAB project aims to improve the social integration of refugees in the academic environment by involving refugees as experts and teaching staff in Higher Education Institutions. It is a partnership between organisations from different EU countries.

<https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/charter-edc-hre-pilot-projects/colab-a-laboratory-for-new-forms-of-collaboration>

Employability Pathways: an integrated approach to recognising the skills and experiences of new migrants, report for EQUAL project. (2007) Phillimore J, Goodson L, Hennessy D, Ergun E <http://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv%3A21921>

Empowering Migrants and Refugees - A competence-oriented career guidance tool as the first step of a validation process

A link to a presentation that gives an overview on national systems for validation of informal and non-formal learning in Europe and presents a tool for identification of competences in migrants and refugees – the Competence Cards. The presentation outlines the validation process and core elements as well as quality criteria for any validation system. It then compares eight European good practice examples. In a second part it describes the development and use of the Competence Cards. This is a tool that helps to identify competences and support the clearing situation at the beginning of any guidance process. The cards are modular, multi-lingual, contain a key visual illustrating the competence and further support for the guide. They come in a set with cards for interests and with templates for a documentation of the identified competences. The presentation provides a download link to the English version of the cards and a 10 minute instruction video for its use.

<https://www.slideshare.net/BertelsmannStiftung/empowering-migrants-and-refugees-a-competenceoriented-career-guidance-tool-as-the-first-step-of-a-validation-process>

EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals

EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals is intended for use by services that may be offering assistance to people for non-EU countries. It can be used in an interview situation to get to know the individual, their skills, qualifications and experiences. Some of the key features are:

- It is a web-based tool - completed profiles are exportable as PDF or XML files.
- Free of charge
- It is available in all EU languages and in Arabic, Farsi, Pashto, Sorani, Somali, Tigrinya and Turkish. It is possible to see two languages at the same time on one screen, reducing language barriers.

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1412&langId=en>

The screenshots of the tool being used in Arabic are provided below as an illustration:

PERSONAL INFORMATION | EXPECTATIONS | SKILLS IDENTIFICATION | OVERALL APPRAISAL AND RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS | SUMMARY

LANGUAGE | EDUCATION AND TRAINING | LITERACY SKILLS | NUMERACY SKILLS | DIGITAL SKILLS | PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

SKILLS ACQUIRED OUTSIDE THE WORKPLACE | OTHER BASIC AND TRANSVERSAL SKILLS | DRIVING SKILLS

Please select the statements below which best suit your general working style. I like to*:
 *يرجاء اختيار الجملة الأقرب لموقفك من بين الجمل الواردة أدناه: أريـب في

Work independently
 العمل باستقلالية



EXPORT | SAVE | CLEAR | TOP | BACK | NEXT

EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals - a screenshot of a tool being used in Arabic

SKILLS ACQUIRED OUTSIDE THE WORKPLACE | OTHER BASIC AND TRANSVERSAL SKILLS | DRIVING SKILLS

Do you have any professional/work experience?
 هل لديك أي خبرة مهنية/ الوظيفية؟

Yes / نعم
 No / لا

For how long?
 كم كانت مدته؟

Week(s)
 الأسابيع
 - 0 +

Month(s)
 الشهور
 - 0 +

Year(s)
 السنين
 - 0 +

When were you last in professional/work

EXPORT | SAVE | CLEAR | TOP | BACK | NEXT

Europass CV

Europass is a free, website-based service to help individuals to communicate their skills, qualifications and experience across Europe through the use of a Europass CV. The CV, and a cover letter can be created online. Europass Language Passport, a self-assessment tool for language skills and qualifications can also be created online. Anyone using this in the context of working with refugees/resettled persons should note that while it can be a useful tool, the assumptions behind it are Eurocentric and are not easily adapted to education and work experience gained

outside the European context. More on Europass can be found at <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/> and on the CV at <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/documents/curriculum-vitae>

Moving on? Dispersal policy, onward migration and integration of refugees in the UK. Employment briefing by Stewart, E. and Shaffer, M. (2015) University of Strathclyde, Glasgow. Contains findings about the impact of the area where refugees live on finding employment, type of employment they access and onward migration and is suitable for use across the UK.

<http://www.onwardmigration.com/files/2012/12/Employment-Briefing-.pdf>

NARIC

The designated UK national agency that provides a service that compares qualifications gained in other countries to UK qualifications

<https://www.naric.org.uk/naric/>

National Careers Service

Professional, qualified careers advice for adults

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/>

RefuAid

This social enterprise offer a range of support for refugees and asylum seeker including: 0% interest loans that refugees can use for requalification; exam fees and travel expenses for English language courses; and, requalification and employment guidance. <https://refuaid.org/>

Refugee Action (2016) Let Refugees Learn <https://www.refugee-action.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/letrefugeeslearnfullreport.pdf>

Refugee Council: Refugees into Teaching

The project is for refugees with a background in teaching who are looking to requalify and access employment within primary and secondary education across England. The project cannot provide direct services, but it still accepts registrations and provides:

- Access to Facebook group for refugee teachers
- Website-based information resources
- Email newsletter containing information about relevant services and events
- Access to regular training and information workshops
- Limited voluntary school placements.

https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/refugees_into_teaching

Refugee Healthcare Professionals

A webpage containing information and links to resources and projects working with Refugee Healthcare Professionals through NHS Employers:

<http://www.nhsemployers.org/your-workforce/recruit/employer-led-recruitment/refugee-healthcare-professionals>

Refugee Healthcare Professionals North East Project

<http://www.refugee.org.uk/healthcareprofessionals>

Although this project is focused on the North East, other regions could adopt similar models and the partnership approaches recommended here could be adapted for use with or without a special regional project.

Refugee Council: Refugees into jobs

Provides information related to supporting refugees into employment and links to the range of current projects:

- Refugee Employment Advice & Support Service
- Refugee Health Professionals
- Starbucks Employment Programme
- Refugees into Teaching
- Just Bread project

<https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/rij>

Refugee Resource

Refugee Resource is a charity that provide psychological, social and practical support to refugees mainly in Oxfordshire. This includes Employment and Education Support and Refugee Health Professionals Fund. The models of provision shown here could be used anywhere in the UK.

<https://www.refugeeresource.org.uk/employment-support>

Resettling refugees: support after the first year - a guide for local authorities (2017)

<https://www.local.gov.uk/resettling-refugees-support-after-first-year-guide-local-authorities>

The Restart Refugee Support

RRS programme supports professional refugees resettled in the UK by supporting individuals' own efforts towards self-sufficiency. It provides cost and interest-free loans for activities related to economic integration. <http://restartrefugeesupport.org/>

RISE

Provided by Reinisi, RISE is a free service to help refugees find jobs. It delivered in collaboration with a wide range of partners and supporters across ten London Boroughs. Although London based, the reports and resources can be useful in any situation. <http://www.renaisi.com/rise/> and a report from the RISE launch <http://www.renaisi.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/RFN20170719-final.pdf>

Skill Lab

Skill Lab's service uses an intuitive and engaging smartphone application that allows individuals to capture the range of past experiences and skills acquired in their native language without the need to type. Creating pathways to employment for third country nationals (TCN) is a Skill Lab app specifically designed for refugees <https://www.skilllab.io/>

Step up 'How to get Refugees into Work Quickly' by Philippe Legrain

This report sets out how best to get refugees and into work quickly, with a focus on entry-level jobs. <http://www.opennetwork.net/step-get-refugees-work-quickly/>

Supporting People with English Language Needs to Access Apprenticeships:

A Guide for Employers, and Providers of ESOL and Apprenticeships

<https://www.learningandwork.org.uk/resource/supporting-people-with-english-language-needs-to-access-apprenticeships/>

TARGETjobs

Useful information about equality and diversity, how to ensure fair recruitment and links to other sources of support <https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/equality-and-diversity/668665-equality-and-diversity-issues-and-your-graduate-job-hunt>

TERN - The Entrepreneurial Refugee Network

Founded in 2016, TERN is a social enterprise that supports and empowers refugees in the UK to realise their potential, fulfil their aspirations and develop their own businesses. <http://www.wearatern.org/>

Transitions – Assessing the skills of refugee professionals

A social enterprise supporting skilled refugee professionals into internships and employment. Although based in London, the models of provision can easily be adapted for use by others based elsewhere. <https://transitions-london.co.uk/>

Wonder Foundation

A charity dedicated to empowering vulnerable people through education with a focus on women and girls. The website contains information about their projects and publications including many relating to refugees. The link provided is for a blog about

refugees employment challenge: <https://www.wonderfoundation.org.uk/blog/road-refugee-integration-employment-challenge>