

Problem Statement

To support you in creating an effective call to action, we've outlined common barriers and challenges that refugees face when accessing economic opportunities, along with suggested strategies to help overcome them.

Recruitment:

1. Building confidence in English to ultimately obtain a position that matches their experience, skills, and qualities.

Suggestions of what employers could do:

- Recruit into roles in the organisation that don't require fluent English, allow time for staff member to access English courses, and consider opportunities for progression once English confidence has improved
- Simplify job descriptions; less jargon, reviewing essential and desirable criteria; is there too much? Are they all needed for the role or are there elements that can be learnt on the job?
- Review interview process; theme of questions or the actual given beforehand, when inviting in for interview, mention how questions will be scored
- Accessible guidance for how best to showcase skills in job interview, e.g. Remind them of STAR interview response technique
- Partner / work with a training provider to support curriculum development and/or delivery of vocational English course(s), perhaps offering sessions in the workplace, or work experience.

2. Gaps on the CV due to prolonged asylum process during which most refugees are unable to work.

Suggestions of what employers could do:

- When recruiting take consideration of refugee experiences which may make long periods of unemployment unavoidable
- Focus on their transferable skills and qualities and offer longer term volunteering opportunities with the view of getting people work ready

3. Lack of host country references, or unable to provide required documents for DBS check.

Suggestions of what employers could do:

- -Consider if they want to challenge negative DBS decisions on the basis of lack of some documentation
- -Think creatively about alternatives to employer references (we are aware that this is sometimes unavoidable)

4. Applying for jobs and not successful in securing these

Suggestions of what employers could do:

- Review job descriptions

- Review the levels of English or particular qualifications specified on job descriptions; are these necessary for the type and level of role?
- Training HR/recruitment staff in unconscious bias/ accessible and inclusive recruitment
- Review interview process; theme of questions or the actual given beforehand
- Accessible guidance for how best to showcase skills in job interview, e.g. Remind them of STAR interview response technique
- Providing clear feedback after the interview.

5. Feeling uncertain about UK work culture, expectations, and processes.

Suggestions of what employers could do:

- To offer work experience opportunities (paid ideally), with clearly defined roles and outcomes.
- Offer 'Open days' or inclusion events to open the space to public and make space less intimidating
- Offer information about company in a range of languages
- Outreach activities where company representatives visit community hubs/ venues

6. Qualifications in skilled area of work aren't recognised in the UK: Refugees may have gained qualifications and work experience in a different labour market, but they might lack the documentation to verify their education and skills

Suggestions of what employers could do:

- Resources available online, such as NARIC UK, that will verify educational and skills equivalence from institutions across the globe. Cover the costs of this process for job applicants.
- Think creatively about how individuals can work in similar job roles e.g. someone with a law degree may not be able to practice in the UK but can work as a paralegal to support them with gaining experience.
- Provide on the job training
- Think creatively about ways job applicants can demonstrate skills, other than through application forms and traditional job interviews, e.g. including tasks to demonstrate ability, or a short work trial.

7. Racism and negative stereotyping. Cross-cultural misunderstandings can contribute to misplaced suspicion and hostility

Suggestions of what employers could do:

- Provide EDI training to all staff
- Engage an external trainer to deliver intercultural awareness training

8. Employers unsure of the different visa types and may hold the workplace perception that it would be more admin/ costly when hiring refugees

Suggestions of what employers could do:

- Connect with organisations providing training to better understand relevant immigration law and the different visa kinds and the entitlements. E.g. differences between ILR/ LTR/ DL

Retention:

1. Cultural differences causing tension e.g. individuals may practice varying religions, traditions and even communication styles.

- EDI training for all staff
- Raise awareness on different cultural practices and make arrangements for cultural and religious holidays and practices
- Identify if there are other staff members in the company, ask if they would be willing to be a mentor or buddy for new employees so that feel comfortable about approaching them with questions.

2. In work support: Consider where employees can work part-time or flexible hours to continue their English language or other training, as well as meet any caring commitments.

Progression:

1. Individuals may feel lack the confidence/ reluctant to go for higher positions

- Performance appraisal to include recording skills and achievements, identify employee goals and provide constructive feedback. Allow for individuals to have a mentor, coaching, 'buddy' or shadowing once a week to support them in their progression
- Employer to keep a record of their long-term goal in employment and supporting to reach this through training in the company