# Professional bodies and supporting highly-skilled refugees into employment

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## Aims

The aims of the project were to review professional bodies' policies and activities in relation to supporting refugees into employment, establish what the barriers and issues are, and to make recommendations to help professional bodies improve their practice. It was produced by Leeds Beckett University in partnership with Migration Yorkshire, as part of Refugee Integration Yorkshire and Humber, part-funded by the European Union Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund.

## Methodology

The following methods were used:

- A review of literature on highly skilled migrants and professional bodies.
- A review of the websites and activities of a sample of UK professional bodies.

Interviews and informant discussions with refugees with a professional background (mostly based in Yorkshire and Humber), and representatives from professional bodies and related organisations. Overall 33 people contributed to the research.

## Key issues

The research identified key barriers for refugees in re-entering their professions – specifically a lack of the following:

- early access to appropriate English language provision
- high quality information, advice and guidance
- professional networks
- qualifications recognition and skills assessment
- high quality mentoring
- help with job searching
- support with CV writing and interview preparation
- work placement and volunteering opportunities.

Little literature was identified which recognised professional bodies' potential scope to facilitate change in this area.

A review of professional bodies found that few currently recognise the potential of the refugee cohort, and still fewer offer any specific support for this group. Some areas of good

practice were identified however, particularly in the health, IT and engineering sectors.

## Recommendations

The research makes a number of thematically grouped recommendations for professional bodies:

Awareness of the issue and their potential role:

- Approach refugee support organisations for guidance and support on refugee issues, and potential partnership.
- Be aware of the particular issues for women in re-entering their professions.
- Take a proactive approach.
- Embed the work within the organisation to ensure continuity.

Clear and accessible advice:

- Ensure key information such as details of a contact person are easy to find and not in a members-only area.
- Provide a simple guide to the profession.
- Make sure information is accessible to both refugees and support workers.
- Take an inclusive approach, for example sharing case studies.
- Provide information on alternative career pathways.

Qualifications

- Provide clear information on accreditation.
- Waive fees for registration and accreditation.
- Provide early support to avoid skills being lost.

Experience

- Offer a mentoring or coaching scheme.
- Provide access to events organised by the profession.
- Engage employers to help facilitate placements and shadowing opportunities.

Offer voluntary and placement opportunities within the professional body.

Web Link
https://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/refugee-integration-yorkshire-and-humber/…
Migrant Group
Refugees
Topic
Access to employment
Community and society
Further and higher education
Migrant workers
Unemployment
Place
Yorkshire & Humber - region-wide
Year
2022
Month
12

Resource Type
Report

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