What common policy recommendations emerge from literature?

While few policy proposals directly address the specific challenges experienced by the refugee groups studied in the

Making Strides report, broader trends in policy recommendations offer valuable insights. Most research agrees that any recommendations to support refugees in job progression do not have a “silver bullet” solution, and a multi-pronged approach is necessary, with the support of various stakeholders, to ensure successful integration and better job progression opportunities for refugee groups.

Some studies emphasise the vital role that career guidance can play in ensuring people attain career progression. Hodkinson (2008) highlights that career guidance can help people build control over their lives and, therefore, find work that is fulfilling. However, skilled professionals who understand career pathways and an individual’s aspirations are necessary to offer quality advice. Good career guidance requires a holistic approach that values individual control and the development of a person’s career aspirations beyond placing them in any entry-level job. Arthur et al (2023) recognise that many career services focus on getting refugees into any job, not long-term career development. Their research concludes that higher-quality career advice is necessary to move refugee groups beyond entry-level roles.

Davey and Jones (2020) call for streamlined, speedy processes to recognise and integrate skilled overseas professionals. Especially in the UK, where there is a shortage of skills in sectors like education and medicine, a flexible approach to accreditation could mitigate these shortages. The OECD’s study on the labour market integration of Ukrainian refugees (2023) recommended boosting job search support, improving the verification of foreign

qualifications, and having a more sophisticated system for assessing skills to maximise employment potential.

Wilimarsi and Gloster (2022) highlight the importance of employers proactively supporting refugees as part of their hiring practices. Understanding the advantages of hiring people from a refugee background can fill skills shortage gaps, increase diversity within organisations, and meet corporate social responsibility priorities.
Abundant literature points towards the importance of improving English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision to support refugees in improving their employment and progression prospects. This was highlighted in the study by Holtom and Iqbal (2020) and More in Common and USPUK (Anstruther et al 2023). The latter stressed that for Afghan women in particular, accelerating language support in parallel to employment support would be more effective, rather than a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach.

Finally, recommendations addressing structural barriers that prevent progression, such as employment bans for people seeking asylum, have also been highlighted in research. For example, Fasani et al (2020) stress the need for a zero-cost policy that accelerates refugee integration by removing employment bans to ease access to the labour market. Such initiatives require no funding and would only require legislative intervention.

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