



The Inclusive Recruitment Checklist

Introduction

This checklist is designed to help employers access hidden talent, diversify their workforce and restart the careers of refugee professionals. It draws on insight from refugee professionals and employers as well as best practice from the refugee employability sector.

In June 2022 a staggering milestone was reached, over 100 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide. Forced to flee their home countries due to war, violence, conflict or persecution leaving everything behind, including their way of life, friends, families, social and professional networks.

On arrival in the UK, refugees and asylum seekers with the right to work face multiple barriers to securing employment. Job Descriptions often state that UK work experience is essential, recruiters or algorithms dismiss CVs with career gaps, and cultural norms can be misunderstood.

Even when employers implement equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives, refugee professionals can remain invisible because refugee status is not one of the 9 protected characteristics recognised by the 2010 Equality Act.

The end result? Refugees are long-term unemployed or take low skilled work, and employers miss out on talent.

By understanding the distinct barriers that refugee professionals face, employers can help level the playing field and make their recruitment practices and workplaces more inclusive. It's a WIN – WIN.

STAGE 1. ATTRACTING TALENT

Barrier for refugee	Action hiring manager/recruiter can take	Check
Lack of professional networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When carrying out a job analysis for a vacancy avoid doing what you have always done, consider if the role could be filled by a refugee professional on a Returner Placement. A Returner Placement can be for one person or a cohort and is designed to support people returning to work after a career break (typically 1 year or more). Contact Renaishi to find out more. Attract diverse talent to apply for roles by expanding where you post jobs. The Building People jobs board is a good way to reach untapped talent in the built environment. Other cross-sector diverse jobs boards; Niya - Social Mobility Platform and Bridge of Hope Consider using specialist refugee employment organisations – see a UK-wide list here: Refugee Employment Network Develop a short-term mentoring programme that builds a pipeline of experienced talent for your organisation. Contact Renaishi to find out more. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Lack of UK experience	<p>As you write the job description and job specification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> focus on the tasks and transferable skills required and what the candidate will achieve in the role. challenge yourself and colleagues; will upskilling address any gap in UK specific knowledge? is UK experience essential for the role? If not, remove it. value overseas experience, knowledge and skills – the interview offers a far better opportunity to probe for gaps in knowledge and experience. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Language	<p>In the job description, person specification and advert:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> minimise the use of acronyms, jargon and buzzwords that may be unfamiliar to applicants who are new to the UK. remove words that may be off-putting to refugee professionals such as 'native' or 'local'. consider the use of specialist software to decode and remove any biased language. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

STAGE 2. CV SCREENING

Barrier for refugee	Action hiring manager/recruiter can take	Check
Lack of understanding about a refugee's permission to work	<p>An asylum seeker is usually not allowed to work (although some are), when asylum is approved that person is granted refugee status.</p> <p>Refugee status gives the individual the right to work and stay in the UK for up to five-years this is known as Leave to Remain, after which they can apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain.</p> <p>An applicant with refugee status is resident in the UK, has full permission to work in the UK and a National Insurance number.</p> <p>As an employer you do <i>not</i> require a sponsorship license or need to pay for their visa.</p> <p>You can check right to work of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a refugee by requesting to see their Biometric Resident Permit (BRP) card and checking online by asking them to provide you with their share code (you will need their DOB also).• an asylum seeker by requesting to see their Application Registration Card (ARC) and carrying out a free, quick employment check.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Bias	<p>Bias affects the recruitment decisions you make:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• be aware and take steps to identify your own biases recognising individual and systemic privilege - try this Implicit Association Test from Harvard Business School.• focus on building a culture that fosters and celebrates diversity and inclusion.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Unexplained gap on CV	<p>Refugee professionals' careers are interrupted as they are forced to relocate due to war and/or persecution and in some cases the asylum process itself which can prohibit them from working until they are granted refugee status, resulting in large gaps on CVs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• an interview or pre-screening call is the best way to understand the reasons for a gap on an applicant's CV.• never ask an applicant with refugee status 'why did you leave? The question has no relevance for their ability to do the job, is deeply personal, and has the potential to trigger traumatic memories.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

STAGE 2. CV SCREENING

Barrier for refugee	Action hiring manager/recruiter can take	Check
Non-recognition of overseas qualifications	<p>Refugee professionals are multi-lingual, offer international perspectives and insights and can add considerable value to your organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• are you able to assess an individual's suitability for a role based on their skills and experience?• if you require formal evidence of qualifications - scan CVs for reference to UK ENIC (formerly UK NARIC Agency) which provides a statement of comparability to evidence the level of overseas qualifications http://www.enic.org.uk/.• offer refugee professionals, resident in the UK with the requisite skills and permission to work, paid professional placements as an effective way to address your skills gaps and for refugee professionals to gain experience working for a UK employer.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Overqualified	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don't dismiss a refugee professional for a role because they are overqualified - refugee professionals typically restart their UK career at a lower level due to the many barriers they face such as lack of UK experience.• Focus on development and progression - a highly qualified and experienced refugee professional with the requisite level of support to gain confidence working in the UK will bring enormous value to your team.• Invite an applicant to interview - it is a far better forum to assess if an applicant has the right motivations in applying for a role and could result in an excellent, experienced hire.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Underemployment – working far below skill set and experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be aware that a refugee professional's UK work experience does not reflect their capabilities, but the limited options they have available to them because of the barriers they face seeking employment.• Focus instead on an individual's professional experience acquired overseas, their transferable skills, and attitude to work - refugee professionals demonstrate enormous resilience and adaptability.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

STAGE 3. INTERVIEW AND OFFER

Barrier for refugee	Action hiring manager/recruiter can take	Check
Bias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make your interview panels more diverse - prospective talent gains an insight into how diverse and inclusive your organisation is, candidates have a better experience, and it results in better hiring decisions. • Expand equal opportunities and diversity and inclusion training to include refugee professionals and the barriers they face. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Lack of understanding about UK recruitment processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the point of inviting an applicant to interview, clearly communicate the step-by-step recruitment process. • Send applicants your questions in advance to level the playing field for those who may never have experienced a UK interview or have been taught how to prepare for common, competency-based interview questions. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Miscommunication due to language and cultural differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware that cultural modesty may mean that applicants do not 'self promote' so you may need to probe to find out individual contributions. • Acknowledge and be aware of accentism - there is a risk that candidates with excellent communication skills will be dismissed due to their international accents. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Lack of references from previous employers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept character references from support workers and mentors in lieu of previous employers. An individual with refugee status, is typically unable to contact former employers as they were forced to leave their home country due to persecution and/or their country is at war. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Positive Action	<p>Where you have two equally suitable candidates you can offer the role to the applicant who has a protected characteristic over one who does not for example people from a certain ethnic group who are disadvantaged and/or underrepresented in your workplace or sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use positive action where you can, recruiting based on merit and consideration of personal and systematic barriers and challenges. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

STAGE 4. IN THE WORKPLACE		
Barrier for refugee	Action hiring manager/recruiter can take	Check
Lack of understanding of UK employer culture and norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplement induction with the offer of training and information about workplace norms, expectations and practices to help orientate new starters unfamiliar with working in the UK and your organisation. • Implement a buddy system to help assist new starters not only in meeting other colleagues and getting to grips with their role but in understanding wider workplace culture. • Ensure refugees know their rights as employees under statute and workplace policy. • Consider matching your new employee with a mentor as a mid to long-term measure to help them build out their network and understanding of development pathways and career opportunities. 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Remote onboarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote onboarding is challenging for all new employees consider how you can reduce the additional challenges for refugee professionals by providing a list of commonly used acronyms and providing support in initial meetings. • Facilitate virtual introductions to key colleagues. 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Discrimination and prejudice in the workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure it is understood and that mechanisms are in place for zero tolerance of racial and cultural discrimination. • Make cultural adaptations to the workplace for example acknowledge religious holidays. • If your organisation is making an active choice to employ refugees, consider if this should be publicised internally. This gives colleagues across the organisation the opportunity to understand why your company has chosen to do this and gives you the opportunity to explain the value of a diverse workforce and inclusive culture. • Ask your new employees if they want to be identified as ‘refugees’. Invariably the answer is no, this is personal information that the individual can choose to disclose or not over time. 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Contact us

Renaishi is a social enterprise on a mission to strengthen UK communities by tackling the root causes of social and economic exclusion.

Our Transitions team can help your business to:

- Access a wealth of overseas experienced candidates with transferable professional skills
- Develop a mentoring programme so colleagues can develop skills while supporting refugees to thrive in a UK workplace
- Share best practice and insights through our Workplace Inclusivity Network (WIN) about what it takes to make recruitment and retention practices truly inclusive.

80% of our candidates are offered permanent roles straight away

95% of our candidates move from placement to a permanent role with the same employer.

Get in touch to discuss how we can meet your talent needs and help you build a more diverse workforce and inclusive workplace.

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