



TENT

# How companies can mentor LGBTQ refugees in the UK

A step-by-step guide





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## About the Tent Partnership for Refugees

With more and more refugees displaced for longer periods of time, businesses have a critical role to play in helping refugees integrate economically into their new host communities.

The Tent Partnership for Refugees mobilises the global business community to improve the lives and livelihoods of the over 30 million refugees who have been forcibly displaced from their home countries. Founded by Chobani's Hamdi Ulukaya in 2016, Tent is a network of over 170 major companies committed to integrating refugees. Tent believes that companies can most sustainably support refugees by leveraging their core business operations - by engaging refugees as potential employees, entrepreneurs and consumers. The full list of Tent members can be found [here](#).

Find out more at [tent.org](https://tent.org)



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## About ORAM

Founded in 2008, the Organization for Refuge, Asylum and Migration (ORAM) is a pioneer in advocating for the protection and well-being of extremely vulnerable LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers globally.

ORAM is recognised as the first international NGO to assist people fleeing persecution based on their sexual orientation or gender identity and has since become a thought leader in LGBTQ migration.

ORAM has a long and proud history of creating ground-breaking research on the particular needs of LGBTQ asylum seekers. ORAM supports LGBTQ asylum seekers navigating the long asylum process from the moment they arrive in their first country of asylum to being resettled to a safe third country. We collaborate with local partners and our beneficiaries to ensure that our work is built around the people we serve.

Find out more at: [oramrefugee.org](https://oramrefugee.org)

# Stonewall

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## About Stonewall

Stonewall imagines a world where LGBTQ+ people everywhere can live their lives to the full.

Founded in London in 1989, Stonewall now works in each nation of the UK and has established partnerships across the globe. Over the last 30 years, Stonewall has created transformative change in the lives of LGBTQ+ people in the UK, helping win equal rights around marriage, having children and inclusive education.

Stonewall's campaigns drive positive change for the LGBTQ+ communities, and its sustained change and empowerment programmes ensure that LGBTQ+ people can thrive throughout their lives. Stonewall makes sure that the world hears and learns from the LGBTQ+ communities, and the organisation's work is grounded in evidence and expertise.

Find out more at: [stonewall.org.uk](https://www.stonewall.org.uk)



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## About Micro Rainbow

Founded in 2012 Micro Rainbow is the leading organisation in the UK supporting the integration of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) people who flee persecution and reach the UK in search of safety.

Micro Rainbow's holistic approach to integration is based on three pillars: safe housing, social inclusion and employability support. These programmes ensure that LGBTQI refugees are safe and can live fulfilling lives in the UK.

Micro Rainbow is an award-winning organisation. It is recognised for creating the first ever national safe housing scheme for LGBTQI people fleeing persecution in the UK, with a current capacity of over 22,000 bed-nights a year.

Find out more at: [microrainbow.org](https://microrainbow.org)

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## Authors

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**Steve Roth** is the Executive Director of ORAM. He has two decades of leadership experience in both the private and non-profit sectors, where he has long focused on advocating for marginalised communities in the U.S. and around the world. Most recently, he served as Senior Director of Global Initiatives at Out & Equal Workplace Advocates, where he led the organisation's efforts to advance LGBTQ workplace inclusion globally.

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**Bella Stevens** is the Communications and Development Coordinator at ORAM. She holds a bachelor's degree in Cultural Anthropology from Manchester University and a master's degree in Cultural Anthropology and Sociology from Leiden University. Her ethnographic research focused on how LGBTQ Middle Eastern refugees negotiate the asylum procedure, assimilate to new cultural standards, and rebuild their lives in the Netherlands.



# How to use this guide

This guidebook guides companies on how to establish and implement professional mentorship programmes for LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers in the United Kingdom.

A mentorship programme aims to help LGBTQ refugees strengthen their professional skills, navigate a new job market, learn about cultural workplace norms, and work towards their career goals in their new host country.

This guide includes a background section to provide context on LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers in the UK, a section for mentorship coordinators, a section for mentors, and suggested content/topics for mentor-mentee meetings.



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### **Appointing a Mentorship Coordinator**

Your company should appoint a Mentorship Coordinator who will manage the programme and be the official point of contact for mentors and the partner organisation. Some Mentorship Coordinators may work within the company's Human Resources, Corporate Social Responsibility, or Diversity & Inclusion teams, but could hold any role. They may have already demonstrated an interest in LGBTQ inclusion and/or refugee integration by participating in an Employee Resource Group (ERGs), Diversity & Inclusion committee, or other employee-led volunteer groups.

### **Recruiting mentors**

The Mentorship Coordinator will be responsible for recruiting employee volunteers who will serve as mentors. Mentorship can be an enriching professional and personal experience for both mentors and mentees. LGBTQ refugee mentees bring new perspectives, talent, and skills that mentors can learn from. In addition, mentors have the opportunity to develop their leadership skills, communication abilities, and cross-cultural competencies.

### **Recruiting mentees**

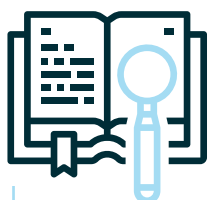
To recruit mentees for this initiative, companies will collaborate with local organisations that are well-positioned to reach LGBTQ refugees. The Tent Partnership for Refugees has a global network of implementing partner organisations and can help connect companies with the right local organisations that work with LGBTQ refugees. Please email [info@tent.org](mailto:info@tent.org) to have a conversation about getting connected to the right organisation.

Each organisation will have its preferences and/or policies that may call for slight modifications to this plan, and that is perfectly fine. We hope this will be a useful guide for developing a mentorship programme for LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers in the UK.

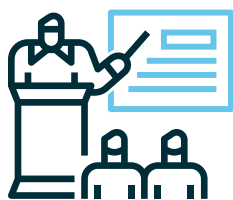




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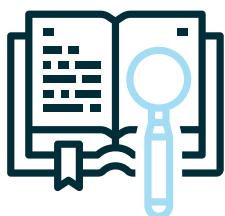
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# Pre-Read On LGBTQ Refugees And Asylum Seekers





## Background on refugees and asylum seekers in the UK

Refugees are individuals who have been forced to flee their home countries because of war, violence, or persecution. To be recognised as a refugee, a person must demonstrate a well-founded fear of persecution in their home country based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership of a particular social group.

In the UK, refugee status is awarded to someone who the Home Office recognises as a refugee as described in the United Nations 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. Refugees are protected by international law and must not be expelled or returned to situations where their life and freedom may be at risk.

### **There are two main ways for someone to be recognised as a refugee in the UK:**

**Resettled refugees** have had their status determined by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) abroad, often in major host countries such as Jordan, Lebanon, or Egypt. They will then be chosen to relocate to the UK to start a new life under a specific resettlement scheme implemented by the Home Office.

**Asylum seekers** are individuals who have fled their home countries and have claimed asylum once they have arrived in the UK, but whose claim for refugee status has not yet been determined by the Home Office. They are protected from any removal procedures until their claim has been processed and their status is determined. Asylum seekers must prove to the Home Office that they meet the criteria for being recognised as a refugee to stay in the UK. Not every asylum seeker will be recognised as a refugee.

The majority of refugees in the UK come as asylum seekers rather than as resettled refugees. From 2017 to 2019, the number of asylum applicants in the UK rose by 32.4%, before dropping by 21.7% in 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.<sup>1</sup>

1. Asylum and refugee resettlement in the UK. <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/migration-to-the-uk-asylum/> May 2021.

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In 2019, the UK granted asylum to 14,995 applicants out of 46,055 total applicants (as well as receiving 5,610 resettled refugees). In 2020, it granted asylum to 9,115 people out of 36,041 asylum applicants. In 2020, Covid-19 prevented almost all refugee resettlement, with the UK receiving only 823 resettled refugees.<sup>2</sup>

### **The asylum application process in the UK**

In the UK, all asylum claims are processed by the Home Office. Asylum seekers go through a two-step interview process and they are usually required to report regularly to the Home Office while their claim is under consideration.

Asylum seekers are generally not allowed to work while the Home Office considers their application, unless they already had permission to work on application. In some cases, when the Home Office takes more than a year to make an initial decision on an asylum claim, asylum seekers can request “permission to work.” If this permit is granted, it only allows asylum seekers to be employed in jobs that are on a list of occupations<sup>3</sup> published by UK Visas and Immigration. These jobs often include jobs that require graduate and post-graduate training like biological and chemical scientists, engineers, architects; or they can also include jobs that require a specific talent or skill, like classical ballet dancers and orchestral musicians.

If an asylum application is rejected, an asylum seeker can appeal the decision. If the appeal fails, they may be able to challenge that on a point of law, or may be able to make a fresh claim if there is new significant evidence. If all fails, they may be deported from the UK.

While waiting for the appeal decision, an asylum seeker can ask for permission to work if the time spent waiting for a claim is more than 12 months.<sup>4</sup>

Depending on their financial situation, asylum seekers may be eligible to access housing and basic living expenses while in the UK. Asylum seekers can claim £39.63 per week, meaning that the majority of people seeking asylum in the UK end up living on £5.66 per day to cover the majority of their needs, including

2. Asylum seekers and grants of asylum, resettled refugees: the UK.  
<https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/migration-to-the-uk-asylum/>. Dec 2020

3. Skilled Worker visa: shortage occupations. April 2021.

4. <https://www.gov.uk/claim-asylum>



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food, clothing, transport, and medicine. According to Refugee Action, more than 70% of asylum seekers in the UK live below the poverty line.

If an asylum seeker is granted refugee status, they and their dependents are allowed to remain in the UK for five years and, at the end of that period, can apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain. They are also allowed to access public funds and to work legally in all industries once they are granted refugee status.

### **Background on LGBTQ refugees or asylum seekers**

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) refugees and asylum seekers are a subset of the broader refugee and asylum seeker population. There are two main subsets of LGBTQ refugees. First, there are individuals who have been forced to flee their homes because of a well-founded fear of persecution in their home country based on their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.<sup>5</sup> Second, there are LGBTQ refugees who have joined their compatriots in fleeing violence and conflict in countries like Syria and Venezuela but face additional challenges navigating their new host countries as LGBTQ individuals.

In many countries around the world, LGBTQ individuals face severe discrimination and violence due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. In at least 69 countries, same-sex relationships are criminalised, exposing millions of individuals to the risk of arrest, prosecution and imprisonment. The death penalty for same-sex relations exists in six UN member-states, including Brunei, Iran, Mauritania, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and Yemen.<sup>6</sup> Even in countries where homosexuality has been decriminalised, LGBTQ people still face discrimination and persecution from non-state actors, and these countries are often unwilling to protect LGBTQ individuals when their human rights are violated.

The Transgender community also faces heightened discrimination around the world. According to Human Rights Watch, at least nine countries have national laws criminalising forms of gender expression that target transgender and gender nonconforming people.

5. Protecting and Assisting LGBT Refugees. U.S. Department of State.  
<https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/prm/policyissues/issues/c62979.htm>

6. State-sponsored Homophobia Report - 2020 Global Legislation Overview Update.  
<https://ilga.org/state-sponsored-homophobia-report-2020-global-legislation-overview>. Dec 2020

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The persecution which LGBTQ individuals face can emerge from many different sources, including the state, community, or family. Many LGBTQ individuals often have no other choice but to flee their country in search of a safer and better life.

LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers come from a variety of academic and professional backgrounds, and may have had extensive careers in their countries of origin. Many LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers are aged 18 to 25, although LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers of all ages may be fleeing persecution. There is a lack of official statistics on the number and background of LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers worldwide.

### **Context on LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers in the UK**

According to the latest immigration statistics from the UK Home Office, more than 1,500 people seek asylum in the UK on the basis of sexual orientation every year (based on 2020 statistics, that makes up about 4% of all asylum applicants). The Home Office has not released data on the number of trans or intersex people claiming asylum based on persecution related to their gender identity. In the UK, the top five countries whose citizens referred to sexual orientation in their asylum applications are Pakistan, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Namibia.

The asylum process in the UK is challenging and arduous, often taking many months to complete and, in some cases, years. It can be particularly challenging for LGBTQ individuals to be recognised as refugees, as a person must prove that they are LGBTQ to the Home Office. This decision on whether to grant refugee status depends on whether the interviewer finds the asylum-seeker's account authentic and believable – but each interviewer has their own assumptions about what is considered authentic. The outcome of a claim is largely dependent on evidence that may be difficult to obtain or does not exist, instead of the person's testimony.

For LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers, arriving in the UK does not automatically mean the end of discrimination and hardships, as they often face many challenges integrating into British society. A significant challenge for LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers is that they are often seeking asylum on





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their own. Many LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers flee violence in their home country from relatives and community members and have therefore limited, if any, family ties upon arrival in the UK. As a result, they often have to navigate the search for jobs, housing, and other services alone. Many refugees and asylum seekers tend to find community and social stability with other refugees and asylum seekers from their country of origin, but for LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers coming from countries with homophobic and transphobic cultures, this is often impossible.

Homelessness and access to safe housing is another critical challenge for LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. LGBTQ asylum seekers are housed in shared accommodation with other asylum seekers from the same country of origin, which is often unsafe as they fear reprisal for being a member of the LGBTQ community. As a result, many choose to keep their sexual orientation or gender identity a secret. LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers are often abused and bullied in the shelters that are supposed to be a refuge for them.<sup>7</sup> Concerns over safety forces many LGBTQ asylum seekers out of their assigned accommodation and onto the streets<sup>8</sup>, where they face further violence. Even when granted refugee status, the risk of homelessness remains high for LGBTQ refugees. Under current UK Government policy, individuals who have attained refugee status can continue to receive “Asylum Support” (cash allowance and accommodation) for 28 days after they have been granted refugee status. After this period, the individual will have to find their own accommodation and will not receive a cash allowance. They will however, be entitled to access Universal Credit, like other British citizens.

Experiences of persecution and isolation frequently mean that LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers become a higher risk group for poor mental health. Prior to their arrival in the UK, mental health issues are likely to be rooted in experiences of verbal, sexual, and physical abuse, as well as harassment and alienation

7. UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Protecting Persons with Diverse Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities: A Global Report on UNHCR's Efforts to Protect Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex Asylum-Seekers and Refugees*, December 2015, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/566140454.html> [accessed 1 July 2021]

8. World Economic Forum, *Forgotten twice: the untold story of LGBT refugees*, January 2018, available at: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/01/forgotten-twice-lgbt-refugees/>

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from family and community structures. LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers sometimes experience persecution by family members and consequently suffer residual stress and feelings of isolation.<sup>9</sup>

Forming a social connection with a mentor and receiving assistance as they seek out welcoming, supportive workplaces can improve LGBTQ refugees' feelings of security and belonging. The goal of establishing a mentorship program is to help LGBTQ refugees better integrate into the UK and learn how to translate their skills and experiences in an unfamiliar job market. A mentor can also support the mentee as they develop skills that can help them access jobs, such as strengthening their English language skills, or obtaining degrees and professional qualifications.

As mentioned above, asylum seekers in the UK are only allowed to work in limited situations while they wait for a decision on an asylum case. Once a person has been granted refugee status, they're given permission to work legally in the UK - in any profession and at any skill level. However, even when granted the right to work, it can be challenging for LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers to find jobs due to a lack of familiarity with the UK job market and limited professional connections. Discrimination against LGBTQ people can also make it more difficult for LGBTQ refugees to join the workforce. Regardless of their refugee status, people who identify as LGBTQ - and especially those who identify as transgender - are more likely to face discrimination when seeking work and on the job<sup>10</sup>. The Equality Act 2010 protects LGBTQ people from direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment, and victimisation at work in relation to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Even with this legislation, some refugees and asylum seekers are hesitant to disclose their LGBTQ identities or previous work experience with LGBTQ organisations for fear of how employers might react. Working with a mentor can help LGBTQ refugees become more comfortable coming out in the workplace.

9. Mark Messih, M.D., M.Sc., Mental Health in LGBT Refugee Populations, April 2017, available at: <https://psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.ajp-rj.2016.110704>

10. Stonewall, *LGBT in Britain: Work Report*, April 2018, available at: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/lgbt-britain-work-report>



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This guidebook provides the building blocks for companies to develop a mentorship programme for LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers, with a focus on professional development. Mentorship can be incredibly beneficial in helping LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers to find work and advance their careers. A mentor who offers career guidance, feedback on CVs and cover letters, and helps their mentees develop a professional network can drastically improve the professional experience of an LGBTQ refugee or asylum seeker in the UK.



*LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers often have low confidence and self-esteem because of the persecution and discrimination they have faced by their family, community, or the authorities in their home country. This can be a barrier in securing employment or training in a new country. A mentoring scheme will not only equip LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers with new skills, it will also improve their confidence in accessing employment and education opportunities in the UK."*

**Sebastian Rocca**

Founder and CEO of Micro Rainbow, an NGO dedicated to supporting LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers in the UK



*As a board member of Refugees at Home and through hosting refugees and asylum seekers in my own home, I am acutely aware of the challenges facing this community. Frustration at not being employed and not using valuable existing skills, as well as developing new ones, is a massive problem for many of our guests. UK businesses have a great opportunity to move the dial in resolving this through mentoring and other forms of support. These businesses will likewise benefit from access to a diverse range of exciting new talent. Having been a mentee myself and having run a sizeable mentoring scheme for LGBTQ people for some years now, I have seen first-hand the transformative impact that mentoring schemes can have on the lives of LGBTQ people. I believe that this new initiative has the potential to yield really awesome results."*

**Daniel Gerring**

Trustee at Refugees at Home

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## Reflections from LGBTQ refugees in the UK



*Finding a job wasn't an easy task. Many employers were pleased with my CV but would always give the response: 'You have the qualifications, but you need UK experience.' After some time in the UK, I managed to get a job in my field of studies - accounting and finance. I have not yet arrived at the level I desire, but I hope that with hard work and determination I will get there."*

**A gay Cameroonian refugee in the UK**



*The first problem that I faced was my communication. A high level of English is required to get a good job. If your English is not good enough, then qualifications obtained in the UK are required. And as you know, it takes time to take English language courses. You also need to live somewhere and somehow pay for your housing and other services, and this requires work. In general, it is a vicious circle."*

**A gay refugee from Kyrgyzstan in the UK**



*I was not allowed to work when I arrived in the UK, as I had to wait a few years for my asylum claim to be processed. This meant I did not manage to gain UK work experience while I was waiting. I had a 3-year gap of unemployment on my CV. When I was granted refugee status, I still struggled to find a job as I had to navigate a new system and understand the UK labour market. I always felt that I lost out on opportunities to candidates with more recent UK work experience. I was an executive personal assistant in my home country, and I was not able to translate my qualifications or join the same profession in the UK. I have now retrained as a nurse and am currently completing my last year at university."*

**A lesbian Zimbabwean refugee in the UK**



*I would often struggle to get noticed by recruiters when I first arrived in the UK and was often type casted to certain roles, such as manual labour. I work in a warehouse now. Despite the challenges, I was able to stay motivated and resilient in the fight for looking for a job here in the UK."*

**A bisexual Nigerian refugee in the UK**



*I couldn't work when I first came to the UK because I was undocumented before becoming a refugee. Back home, the only work opportunity for trans people is sex work. Even when we are in a legal situation it is extremely hard to find work as no employer wants to employ a trans person."*

**A trans Brazilian refugee in the UK**

*For more information about LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers in the UK, see:*

[ILGA Europe's Asylum-related resources UNHCR Guidelines on International Protection No.9](#)

[Lessons Not Learned The failures of asylum decision-making in the UK](#)

[No Safe Refuge: Experiences of LGBT asylum seekers in detention](#)

['This is Who I Am' – First-hand accounts of LGBT+ people seeking asylum in the UK about their experiences in their own country and on arrival in the UK, addressing the particular challenges they face.](#)

[ILGA State Sponsored Homophobia](#)

[#OUTLAWED. "The love that dare not speak its name" A report from Human Rights Watch in 2019 about 69 countries with anti-gay laws.](#)

[Micro Rainbow "Poverty, Sexual Orientation and Refugees in the UK"](#)

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*For more information about LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers in the UK workplace, see:*

[UK Employers' Guide to Hiring Refugees](#)

[Refugees and the UK Labour Market. The Centre on Migration, Policy and Society \(COMPAS\), Zovanga Kone, Isabel Ruiz, Carlos Vargas-Silva \(2019\)](#)

[Stonewall's 'LGBT in Britain - Work Report'](#)

[Stonewall's 'Discrimination at Work - Protections in place for lesbian, gay, bi and trans people in employment'](#)



# Guide For Mentorship Coordinators

This guide will equip you with the information your company needs to establish a professional mentorship programme for LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers in your community.

Leading this programme is an opportunity for you and your colleagues who volunteer as mentors to develop inclusive leadership skills, cross-cultural competencies, and stronger communication abilities. For mentees, this is an opportunity to receive career guidance from a trusted resource in an LGBTQ-affirming space and to develop professionally.





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As the Mentorship Coordinator you will be responsible for recruiting colleagues to serve as mentors, supporting the mentor-mentee matching process, organising administrative aspects of the programme, and reminding your mentors to schedule their meetings with their mentees. You will also serve as the point of contact for mentors.

The rest of this guide contains a series of steps to help you establish and run a year-long mentorship programme at your company. **You are welcome to follow the guidance exactly, in line with our best practices, or use it as a starting point to establish a more tailored programme based on your company's capacity, interests, and protocols.**

### **Benefits of mentorship for your employees and company**

Serving as a mentor is an opportunity for you and your colleagues to share your knowledge and expertise with LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers who can benefit from this guidance. The support of mentors from your company will help LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers transfer their knowledge and skills from their country of origin to the UK job market.

Participating in this mentorship programme will also help your staff develop cross-cultural competencies and strengthen their communication abilities. Furthermore, your company will be demonstrating its commitment to supporting marginalised communities, and your LGBTQ employees will be proud to see that their company is supporting one of the most vulnerable segments of the LGBTQ community.

Most importantly, working with a mentor who identifies as LGBTQ or an LGBTQ-ally can have a hugely positive impact on the professional success of an LGBTQ refugee or asylum seeker. By serving as role models for their mentees, providing resources on how to succeed in the workplace as an LGBTQ person, and helping their mentees build their professional networks, mentors have an opportunity to change the course of a refugee's life.

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**Suggested components of a professional mentorship programme for LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers:**

- Mentors & mentees meet – either in person or virtually – at least four times over the course of a year to discuss various professional development topics (meeting resources, including pre-reads and mentor-mentee exercises, can be found below in the [Guide for Mentors section](#)).
- Mentors offer guidance to help mentees in their job search process, including by giving tips on CVs, LinkedIn profiles, cover letters, and interviews.
- Mentors help mentees better understand cultural norms in the workplace.
- Mentors assist their mentees in developing a professional network in their field of interest.



## Overview of steps to implement a mentorship program at your company:

- 01** Recruit mentors at your organisation

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- 02** Identify a partner organisation to connect you with mentees

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- 03** Match mentors and mentees

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- 04** Prepare mentors for their role

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- 05** Organise mentor-mentee meetings

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- 06** Support mentors over the course of the programme

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- 07** Measure success with a post-programme survey

# 01

## Step one:

### Recruit mentors at your organisation

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One of your primary responsibilities as a Mentorship Coordinator is to recruit LGBTQ employees and allies at your company to serve as mentors. We recommend that you recruit mentors from a variety of professional and personal backgrounds, with a particular focus on those who hold LGBTQ identities. Note that allies should also be welcome to serve as mentors, particularly those who speak foreign languages.

*Since you will be collecting information from prospective mentors and receiving information about prospective mentees from your partner organisation/s, please ensure that you are adhering to your company's internal privacy and data safeguarding policies in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Please refer to the Annex on [page 88](#) for more information on safeguarding and data privacy. For more information about GDPR, please get in touch with your Human Resources lead.*

#### Steps for recruiting mentors

1. Develop and implement a strategy for recruiting mentors. Examples include:
  - a. Emailing employees at your company with the support of HR or Internal Communications colleagues. An example email is provided in the Appendix on [page 67](#).
  - b. Highlight the initiative at internal company events.
  - c. Promote the initiative through your LGBTQ Employee Resource Group's (ERG) channels.
  - d. Posting about the initiative in internal company channels, such as Slack or Microsoft Teams.
2. Use a survey to collect information from your colleagues and gauge their interest in serving as mentors. The survey should include an overview of this mentorship programme and ask prospective mentors to share information about themselves in order to get matched with a prospective mentee. Note that mentees should complete a similar survey to make it easy to match compatible mentor-mentee pairs. An example survey is provided in the Appendix on page 68.



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3. Check whether your company requires mentors participating in this programme to undergo a **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)** check, which is a UK legal requirement for those in roles which involve regulated activity with vulnerable adults. The DBS check will state any criminal convictions a person holds and, if appropriate, whether they are barred from working with vulnerable adults. Companies can refer to their HR departments for guidance on whether mentors need to obtain a DBS check before participating in the programme and the process for doing so.
  4. Ensure that you understand and comply with your company's guidelines on **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**, particularly when collecting and storing personal data from employees and mentees. Please refer to the Annex on **page 88** for more information on safeguarding and data privacy.

## 02 **Step two:** Identify a partner organisation to connect you with mentees

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While you will be responsible for recruiting mentors at your company, you will need to partner with a local organisation that serves LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers to recruit mentees and facilitate the matchmaking process between mentors and mentees.

- 1.** Approach organisations in your area that serve LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers to see if their clients would be interested in participating in a mentorship programme hosted by your company. A good starting point is Micro Rainbow, a UK national organisation that focuses on supporting LGBTQI asylum seekers and refugees. If you need further help finding the right organisation, reach out to Tent for guidance. If you are planning to develop mentorship programmes in multiple locations, you will need to find a partner organisation in each one. If you are planning to host your mentorship programme virtually, there is more flexibility on the location of the organisation that will help you recruit your mentees.
- 2.** Once you have identified an organisation(s) to partner with, discuss the number of mentors you expect to recruit per location and whether they have a sufficient number of LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers who would be interested in serving as mentees. You should also align on a timeline for outreach to mentees and mentors. Make sure that all LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers referred to you are over the age of 18.
- 3.** Share the sample emails and surveys in the Appendix of this guide with your partner organisation's staff, in order to help them recruit LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers to participate in this mentorship programme. Note that both mentors and mentees should fill out similar surveys (both found in the Appendix) to make it easier to match them based on shared interests.
- 4.** In addition, consider sharing this guide and any other materials you may have developed with the partner organisation so that it has full visibility into the content of the mentorship programme.



**Feel free to reach out to Tent or Micro Rainbow** if you need help finding local organisations that work with with LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers in the UK: [info@tent.org](mailto:info@tent.org) / [movingon@microrainbow.org](mailto:movingon@microrainbow.org)



# 03

## Step three: Match mentors and mentees

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You will need to work closely with your partner organisation(s) to match mentors and mentees.

1. Begin by sending your partner organisation(s) the number of mentors you have recruited per location. Ask them to send you the profiles of an equal number of mentees in each of those cities (subject to availability). These profiles should be based on the responses that they collected via the mentee surveys.
2. Since you will be collecting information from prospective mentors and receiving information about prospective mentees from your partner organisation/s, please ensure that you are adhering to your company's internal privacy and data safeguarding policies in accordance with GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Please refer to the Annex on [page 88](#) for more information on safeguarding and data privacy. For more information about GDPR, please get in touch with your Human Resources lead. We encourage you to meet with data leads at your company to discuss best practices for data management.
3. Once you have received mentee profiles from your partner organisation(s), you will be responsible for matching prospective mentors from your company with mentee candidates. We recommend that you match mentees based on similar professional interests or personal backgrounds (e.g., LGBTQ identities), or based on a shared language.
4. You will facilitate an introduction between the mentor and mentee via email, or the communication channel that best suits the mentee (e.g., WhatsApp, text message, etc.) We recommend matching a cohort of mentors and mentees at the same time so that the pairs can stick to the same timeline for the duration of the programme. Doing this will make the administrative aspects of the programme significantly easier to manage.

## 04 Step four: Prepare mentors for their role

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You will help provide mentors at your company with guidance on how to best prepare for their mentorship experience by sharing the pre-read section of this guide with them ahead of their first meeting with mentees.

The pre-read will provide mentors with a chance to learn more about the background and profiles of LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers, as well as best practices for stepping into a mentoring role. Additionally, you should ask mentors to review the meeting resources included in the Guide for Mentors in advance, so that they can better anticipate what to expect.

Finally, you should encourage individuals who have mentored in the past to bring lessons learned from those experiences to this programme and to share them with their fellow mentors..



*When I think of mentoring, it should ideally be a healthy give and take, where both people are invested in it.*

*In addition to a formal mentoring relationship, mentors should be able to look at the bigger picture, connect and guide mentees to others within their organisation, and embrace some level of uncertainty with a positive attitude."*

**Rajiv Desai**

Founder & CEO - Chrysalis LLC - helping smaller organisations jumpstart their diversity, equity and inclusion journey





# 05

## Step five: Organise mentor-mentee meetings

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After introducing the mentors and mentees over email or by other means, you should set up an initial meeting between mentors and mentees. This meet-and-greet for mentors and mentees will help mentors set expectations with mentees and give them the opportunity to discuss the first professional development topic (career planning).

While meetings can be conducted virtually or in-person, we recommend virtual meetings as this reduces difficulties related to refugees' access to transportation. Some mentees may not have access to free Wi-Fi and many do not have unlimited phone contracts. If your mentees experience barriers in accessing IT, do speak with your partner organisation to find a solution. Mentors can use Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or another video conferencing platform with breakout room capabilities to host the initial meeting. For those using Zoom or Microsoft Teams, mentorship coordinators can start the meeting virtually for the whole group, explain the goals of that specific session, and then place mentors and mentees into breakout rooms for personal conversations. Mentors should start by introducing themselves and stating their pronouns.

If the programme is in-person, we recommend that you offer mentors and mentees a chance to make name tags that include their pronouns. If your office is not conveniently located, you may need to find another venue that is more easily accessible, or potentially consider asking your company to help arrange/pay for transportation for mentees. Mentors and mentees should meet at least three more times over the rest of the year. We recommend a minimum of four meetings throughout the year-long mentorship programme - however, if companies want to include more meetings between mentors and mentees, this is allowed and encouraged. Make sure to communicate early and often with both mentors and mentees to maximise attendance at mentoring sessions.

# 06

## **Step six:** Support mentors over the course of the programme

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### **Support for mentors**

For the duration of the year-long mentorship program, you are the mentors' point of contact if they have questions about the mentorship program.

We do not expect you or your colleagues to be professionally trained on refugees' and asylum seekers' mental health challenges, legal statuses, or other difficulties that may arise for mentees. In the initial meeting between mentor and mentee, you can agree on the boundaries of your relationship (e.g. the best way in which to contact each other, at what hours), and come to an agreement on confidentiality. Mentors and mentees should agree that they can maintain confidentiality, unless they feel someone is at risk of harm, or others around them are at risk of harm. If a mentor raises concerns about a conversation they had with their mentee that they felt was outside the scope of the mentorship programme, or that was in any way inappropriate or concerning, or that indicated the mentee was at risk of harm, do not keep this information to yourself or attempt to manage it on your own. Please follow the steps outlined in the safeguarding materials for more information on how to recognise, respond, record and report a safeguarding concern.

### **Rematching**

In general, we advise against rematching mentor and mentee pairs, as the aim is to allow mentors and mentees to develop a strong relationship over the course of the programme. However, if a mentor or mentee expresses a major concern over their match, please take that into consideration.

### **Checking in with mentors**

We recommend that mentorship coordinators send a check-in email to mentors and mentees at the midpoint of the programme offering to meet if anyone has questions. During these check-ins with the mentorship coordinator, mentors and mentees can share and discuss their concerns and progress, either individually or as a pair.



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**Your company's sexual harassment and conduct policies should apply to mentor-mentee relationships.**

Your company's sexual harassment and conduct policies should apply to mentor-mentee relationships. The mentoring experience is professional in nature and this should be reflected in the conduct of both parties. For the duration of the mentoring relationship, sexual and romantic relationships between mentors and mentees will be prohibited, as will lewd and sexually suggestive comments. A mentor who abuses their status as a trusted figure to engage in a romantic or sexual relationship with their mentee is engaging in sexual misconduct. No participant in this mentorship programme should ever be made to feel intimidated, coerced, unsafe, or undignified based on interactions in person or online. A violation of these principles constitutes harassment.

If a mentor feels uncomfortable with their mentee's behaviour, mentors should raise the issue with you, the Mentorship Coordinator, so you can support them as they reflect on what and why the mentee's behavior feels challenging to them. At the same time, if a mentee feels uncomfortable with their mentor's behavior, they should contact their partner organisation. Please refer to the Annex on [page 88](#) for more information on safeguarding.

# 07

## Step seven (optional): Measure success with a post programme survey

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At the end of the mentorship programme, consider distributing programme evaluation surveys to both mentors and mentees so that they can report back on their experience. These surveys are a great way to unearth best practices and lessons learned so that you can strengthen your company's mentorship programme year after year.

A sample survey and cover email can be found in the [Appendix](#).

Since you will be collecting information from prospective mentors and receiving information about prospective mentees from your partner organisation/s, please ensure that you are adhering to your company's internal privacy and data safeguarding policies in accordance with GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Please refer to the Annex on [page 88](#) for more information on safeguarding and data privacy. For more information about GDPR, please get in touch with your Human Resources lead. We encourage you to meet with data leads at your company to discuss best practices for data management.



## Ensuring the long-term success of the mentorship program

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If you are leaving the company or need to step back from your Mentorship Coordinator responsibilities after a year of service, find a new Mentorship Coordinator within your LGBTQ employee resource group to carry on running the program. Make sure to hand over all essential relationships and resources to the new Mentorship Coordinator.

Likewise, while your colleagues are no longer formally mentors after a year, they should be encouraged to renew their participation in the program for the following year if they have had a positive experience. Additionally, some mentors may opt to stay in touch with their mentees after the conclusion of the program, and in some cases may even form long-term mentoring relationships or friendships with their mentees. Though the parameters of the suggested program are limited to one year, the connections forged may last far beyond the program and continue to positively impact both participants.

# Program kickoff checklist for Mentorship Coordinators:

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- Recruit colleagues to serve as mentors for this programme and distribute the pre-programme mentor surveys.  
*Note: Refer to your HR department for guidance on how to vet mentors, including obtaining a DBS check before participating in the programme. Please refer to the Annex on [page 88](#) for more information on DBS checks.*

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- Collect completed surveys from mentors.

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- Identify a local organisation that serves LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers to partner with you and recruit mentees for the programme.

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- Send the total number of recruited mentors to your partner organisation.

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- Use survey responses to make matches between prospective mentors and mentees.  
*Note: Refer to your HR department and your partner organisation(s) to discuss any privacy and data-sharing concerns before sharing survey results. Please refer to the Annex on [page 88](#) for more information on safeguarding and data privacy.*

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- Once the mentors have been selected, share this guide with them so they can prepare for the programme.

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- Facilitate an introduction between the mentors and mentees via email or other means.

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- Schedule at least four mentorship sessions between mentors and mentees over the course of a year. Companies could consider starting with a group kick-off meeting to introduce mentor and mentee pairs and review expectations for the program.



- 
- Check back in with all mentors and mentees in a group call midway through the year to get feedback and share best practices.
- 
- *OPTIONAL:* At the end of the year, distribute post-programme surveys to mentors and work with your partner organisation to distribute similar surveys to mentees. Analyse survey responses to understand how the mentorship programme at your company can be strengthened.
- 
- If you do not plan to reprise your role as Mentorship Coordinator, find a new volunteer at your company and hand over key relationships and resources.

# Guide For Mentors

This guide contains information and advice that will equip you to serve as a mentor in your organisation's professional mentorship programme for LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers. Participating in this programme is an opportunity for you to strengthen your inclusive leadership skills, cross-cultural competencies, and communication abilities.

For your mentee, this professional mentorship programme is an opportunity to receive professional guidance from a trusted resource in an LGBTQ-affirming space, better understand how to navigate a new job market, and create a professional network in the UK.





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  - d. Advocate for your mentee
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- 2. How to be an effective mentor**
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  - a. Meeting one: Career goals
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# The Mentorship Program

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## **Programme overview**

You will be matched with an LGBTQ refugee or asylum seeker who will be your mentee for the duration of this mentorship programme. As a mentor, you will be expected to:

- Meet with your mentee at least four times over the course of a year to work together on professional development topics, including:
  - Career goals
  - CVs, LinkedIn profiles, and cover letters
  - The interview process
  - Networking
  - Note that meeting resources – including pre-reads and mentor-mentee exercises – can be found at the end of this guide.
- Offer your mentee guidance in their job search process, including advice about CVs and cover letters.
- Help your mentee better understand workplace cultural norms.
- Assist your mentee in developing their professional network.

## **The role of the Mentorship Coordinator**

The mentorship programme at your company will be managed by one of your colleague(s) who has volunteered to serve as the Mentorship Coordinator. This person is responsible for managing all administrative aspects of the programme, including matching mentor-mentee pairs, and running the post-programme review process.

In addition, the Mentorship Coordinator will be your primary point of contact should any questions or challenges arise over the course of the programme. In some cases, they will be able to advise you directly; in other cases, they may refer you to a partner organisation that your mentee has a pre-existing relationship with.

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### **The matching process**

To begin your role as a mentor, you will need to fill out a survey about your professional and personal background. Your Mentorship Coordinator will receive a list of prospective mentees located in your city, match mentor-mentee candidates, and introduce the pairs via email (or via other means as specified).

### **Mentor-mentee meetings**

You will be expected to meet with your mentee at least four times over the course of a year. You should send a personal note to your mentee in advance of each of these meetings via email and/or text message to express your enthusiasm about working together and to confirm their attendance. If you or your mentee cannot make it to one of the meetings, please find an alternative time to meet with them.

As this mentorship programme is focused on professional development, you will be expected to cover a range of relevant topics with your mentee over the course of the year. The final section of this guide consists of resources to help you prepare for each meeting with your mentee, as well as exercises to work through together during these meetings.

You should also consider reaching out to your mentee at other times of the year that are relevant to the LGBTQ community to build a rapport and develop your relationship. Some occasions where this may be appropriate include; LGBTQ history month in February, Trans Day of Visibility on March 31, Lesbian Visibility Week in April, International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia on May 17, and Pride month in June.

### **Support mentees professionally**

When appropriate, your efforts to advocate for your mentee can go a long way. Your support can make a big difference if they are looking to make a professional connection, attend a workplace networking event, or have their CV sent to the right people. In your capacity as a mentor, you can greatly assist your mentee by making introductions between them and your professional contacts.



*"What makes a good mentorship programme for me is having people involved who are really passionate about being part of the initiative, not those that are simply there to satisfy some inclusivity criteria."*

**Shane Corrigan (He/Him/His)**

Software Engineer – IBM Security App Exchange UK

### **Post-programme feedback**

At the end of your year in a formal mentor capacity, you may be asked by your Mentorship Coordinator to complete a survey about your experiences and about your mentee's trajectory. In these feedback forms, consider ways in which your mentee has developed a better understanding of how to navigate the UK job market and workplace culture.

### **Support your mentee post-programme**

At the end of the year, you will no longer formally be a mentor. Additionally, once the programme is complete, the Mentorship Coordinator is no longer responsible for supporting your relationship with your mentee. You may decide to stay in touch with your mentee for professional purposes after the conclusion of the programme, but that is at your discretion. Keep in mind that the sensitivities around inappropriate topics of discussion (which we will touch on shortly) is still crucial even if you are not part of a formal mentoring structure.

Your mentee may ask you to continue to make connections with people in your network or to continue meeting with them to brainstorm ideas and get your advice. Just as setting clear expectations is important at the start of a mentoring relationship, it is also important to set expectations at the conclusion of the programme to clarify how involved you'd like to be moving forward in your mentee's professional development.

If your company's programme to mentor LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers will last for more than one year, we encourage you to serve as a mentor for a new mentee in the additional years of this initiative.

# How to be an Effective Mentor

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## Understand your role as a mentor: a two-way relationship

As a mentor, you have a unique opportunity to help your mentee set their career goals and create plans to achieve them. This is especially valuable to LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers, many of who arrive in the UK without their families and without a robust social network.

However, this experience is not solely about advising. You will also learn from your mentee and develop cross-cultural competencies. Individuals who mentor others develop a greater sense of self-confidence and self-awareness as they develop their leadership skills.

As a mentor stepping into the role of advisor, we recommend that you focus on providing your mentees with **guidance, rather than solutions**. You are not a case manager or decision-maker. Your role is to provide ideas, tools, and skills that can bolster your mentee's long-term success. You can also point your mentee in the direction of specific resources or people that might be able to help them build skills outside of your area of expertise.



*Regardless of where you sit in the corporation, your experiences and values can be meaningful when giving back to the community."*

**Rick Wilson**

Director of Diversity & Inclusion at AT&T



*In the times that I have played the role of Mentor myself, it has always been a very rewarding experience. Not only because you get to pass on your experience and fresh perspectives, but because you often learn something from the Mentee too – whether it be cultural, operational, or simply form a great new professional contact."*

**Thornall Hembrow**

Vice President, CIB Technology Organisational Engagement | J.P. Morgan UK



*When mentoring, it's important to recognise that you are not the expert and you are not expected to know everything. There is not a hierarchy of relationships. It is a two-way relationship. As much as you are teaching and training them, they are doing the same for you."*

**Kajal Shahali**

Youth Programme Manager at Refugee & Immigrant Transitions (RIT)

### **Be aware of sensitivities**

Working with LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers requires paying attention to sensitive issues. Your role is not to act as a social worker or psychologist, and you must respect important boundaries. Do not ask probing questions about your mentee's life in their country of origin or their asylum claim that may require them to re-live traumas.

It is appropriate to ask about their professional experiences before and after arriving in the UK; it is not appropriate to ask questions about their families, the political situations in their countries of origin, or the specifics that led them to leave. *Note: Your mentee may volunteer this kind of personal information on their own and, if that does happen, you are welcome to engage in that conversation if you both feel comfortable doing so. However, be mindful of your position of power, the code of conduct and the safeguarding guidelines at the end of this guide.*

LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers might have different norms and understanding about sexual orientation and gender identity than you do. Do not make assumptions about your mentee's identity based on their appearance or dress. Recognise that cultural differences may inform different perceptions of what it means to be part of the LGBTQ community. At the start of your time with your mentee, ask how they would like to be addressed. This can be a helpful way to understand the name by which they'd like to be called and the pronouns that reflect their gender identity. Mentors should share this information too.

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Keep in mind that there may be considerable cultural, political, and philosophical differences between you and your mentee, even if you share a similar LGBTQ identity. Just as it is not your place to pry for details about your mentee's experiences in their country of origin, it is not appropriate for you to disparage them for a political stance that you disagree with.

It is also important to be considerate of the type of career that your mentee aspires to. Be conscious of the fact that refugees and asylum seekers often need immediate opportunities to make a living upon arrival in the UK and, if they aren't fluent in English yet or their credentials are not recognised, they may need to work in lower-paying jobs before they can find work in their area of interest or expertise. Some refugees and asylum seekers may be content with remaining in lower-paying or lower-skill roles longer-term, while for others, these kinds of roles may be a necessary stepping stone to jobs in their fields of interest.

Finally, note that many refugees and asylum seekers leave successful, stable careers in their countries of origin and have to readjust their career expectations upon arriving in the UK. If this is the case with your mentee, be sensitive to their desire to continue in their field of expertise, even if they are working a lower-skill job in the interim. Consider how you can support them as they work towards re-establishing themselves in their chosen field.



*I have often said to volunteers and mentors, the fact that you want to volunteer with refugees and asylum seekers demonstrates that you have an open mindset, but half the refugee and asylum-seeking population you will be working with will not necessarily have your liberal values. Part of cultural humility is putting that aside for a minute and sitting in how uncomfortable that might be. To build a relationship with someone who is completely different from you."*

**Kajal Shahali**

Youth Programme Manager at Refugee & Immigrant Transitions (RIT)





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## Managing expectations

Be clear with your mentee about what they can expect from your relationship. Your role is to work with your mentee to make them a stronger candidate for employment, but you cannot guarantee that your support will result in your mentee landing a job by the end of the year-long programme. You should emphasise this distinction to your mentee upfront to avoid disappointment or misunderstanding down the line.

### Things that your mentee can expect of you include:

- Working together to sharpen your mentee's job acquisition skills.
- Explaining CV fundamentals and offering your mentee feedback on their CV.
- Discussing how to navigate corporate workplaces in the UK.
- How to handle a job interview
- Discussing networking and potentially connecting your mentee with relevant contacts in your own network.
- Unpacking the social and cultural norms in UK work environments.
- Advocating for your mentee when you come across opportunities for them to build their professional network or seek out job opportunities.

You should be honest about what you can bring to the mentorship experience from the start. Consider how much time you are willing to commit to proofreading CVs and cover letters or doing other activities to support your mentee outside your scheduled meetings. If you are not sure, or if both you and your mentee find it difficult to discuss these issues alone, you can contact the Mentorship Coordinator for advice.

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### **Model appropriate behaviour and conduct**

An important aspect of this mentoring relationship is maintaining trustworthiness and respecting your mentee's confidentiality. It is imperative that you honour their trust to the greatest extent possible. Follow the safeguarding procedure in the Annex on [page 88](#).

Your company's sexual harassment conduct and policies should apply to the mentor-mentee relationships. This mentoring experience is professional in nature and should reflect that in the conduct of both parties. We expect that for the duration of the mentoring relationship, sexual and romantic relationships between mentors and mentees will be prohibited, as will lewd and sexually suggestive comments. If you abuse your status as a trusted figure to engage in a romantic or sexual relationship with your mentee, this constitutes sexual misconduct. No participant in this mentorship should ever be made to feel intimidated, coerced, unsafe, or undignified based on interactions in person or online. A violation of these principles constitutes harassment. If you feel uncomfortable with your mentee's behaviour, you should raise the issue with the Mentorship Coordinator, so they can support you as you reflect on what and why the mentee's behavior feels challenging to you. At the same time, if a mentee feels uncomfortable with their mentor's behavior, they should contact their partner organisation. Please refer to the Annex on [page 88](#) for more information on safeguarding.



*There is a special dimension when it comes to LGBTQ mentors. I know they understand some of the nuances and complexities that come from being different in this way and it helps to form close bonds, trust, and deep understanding which has helped me grow authentically as a professional and as a person. I'm not sure I'd be in the position I am today without the brilliant mentors I've had along the way."*

**Roman Podolczuk**  
Consultant - IBM Services UK



# Mentor–mentee meeting resources

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As a mentor, your primary objective throughout this mentorship programme is to support your mentee in their career and professional development. With this goal in mind, we have identified a series of relevant topics for you to discuss with your mentee in each of your four meetings:

- 01** Career goals\*
- 02** CVs, LinkedIn profiles, and cover letters
- 03** The interview process
- 04** Networking

Below you will find meeting pre-reads for you and suggested exercises for you and your mentee to work through together in each of your meetings. Note that for any of your meetings, you may choose to cover a different topic, either at the discretion of your Mentorship Coordinator or if you and your mentee determine that a given topic is a better use of time.

*Note that the resources for this first meeting also include tips for setting expectations with your mentee regarding the mentorship programme and your relationship. Even if you do choose to cover a topic other than career goals during your first meeting, you should still plan to set expectations with your mentee to lay the groundwork for a successful year together.*



# 01

## Meeting one: **Career goals**

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### **Purpose of meeting**

- ▲ Get to know your mentee.
- ▲ Begin to develop concrete steps for their career trajectories.
- ▲ Establish goals and expectations for mentorship.

### **Exercises**

#### **1. Get to know one another**

- a.** Use the following conversation starters to share some of your own experience as an LGBTQ person or ally in the workplace.

*Tell your mentee:*

*i. About your own professional history and future career goals.*

*ii. How has your LGBTQ identity played a part in your career?*

*iii. If you are an ally, what have you witnessed that is helpful to share?*

- b.** Your mentee may be hesitant to open up immediately, so asking surface level questions is a good place to start. Remember not to ask invasive and potentially re-traumatizing questions.

#### **2. Start a conversation about your mentee's career goals.**

- a.** Does your mentee have specific career aspirations, such as an interest in a certain industry or professional skill-set?
- b.** What is your mentee's motivation to enter a specific field? Learn more about their professional interests to get to know them better.

- c.** Ask about their long-term career aspirations and where they would like to be career-wise in one to five years' time. What steps do they think they might need to take to find a job that matches this vision?
- d.** Discuss educational opportunities. Is your mentee interested in going to university/college, taking a language course or vocational training?
- e.** Discuss the transfer or confirmation of qualifications. Did your mentee use to practise a profession or trade in their country of origin that they'd like to pursue in the UK? What steps might they need to take to obtain qualifications for the UK job market?

### **3. Clarify expectations of the mentorship**

- a.** Write down what you and your mentee both see as necessary and important goals for the mentorship experience. You can refer back to these goals in your future sessions.
- b.** Confirm that your mentee understands that you will be supporting their professional development over the coming year, but that you are not able to guarantee that you will be able to help them land a job within that time frame.
- c.** Have a discussion with your mentee about what the best method of communication is for both of you, what is the best time of day to meet (e.g., some people might not want to meet outside of work hours), whether face-to-face or virtual is best for you both, and whether or not you will use social media to connect.



## NEXT STEPS

1. Discuss ways that you can be supportive of your mentor in the coming weeks. Consider setting deadlines for any next steps.
2. Establish expectations for follow-up and any other communication between meetings.
3. If helpful, ask your mentee to create a document that outlines some of their short- and long-term career goals. However, be mindful that they may not have access to a computer. If it is the case, you can help your mentee to identify places where they can access computers, such as local libraries.
4. In your next meeting, you will be focusing on CVs and cover letters. Ask your mentee to bring a CV and sample cover letter with them, or email you in advance if they don't have a printer, for you to review. Note that your mentee can use documents from a previous job application. Finally, consider bringing printed copies of your own CV and a cover letter to share with your mentee as an example. If your meeting will be held via video conference instead of in person, make sure to exchange all of these documents with your mentee by email in advance.

# 02

## Meeting two: **CV and cover letters**

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### **Purpose of meeting**

- ▲ Explain a CV's purpose and function.
- ▲ Explain a cover letter's purpose and function.
- ▲ Explain a LinkedIn profile's purpose and function.
- ▲ Strengthen your mentee's CV, LinkedIn profile, and cover letter templates.

### **Exercises**

#### **1. Discuss the purpose and function of CVs and cover letters**

- a.** Share how CVs factor into the job search process and the specific nuances of CVs in the UK job market, including what elements of a CV are most important in the UK, and in your mentee's country of origin (e.g. content, design, etc.). Review how CVs can be uploaded to recruitment websites like Indeed, LinkedIn, TotalJobs, etc.
- b.** Discuss the purpose of cover letters. Share with your mentee how to properly format cover letters in the UK, and talk about the use of cover letters in their home country. Discuss the differences and pros and cons of both.
- c.** Review LinkedIn and help them set up a LinkedIn profile if they don't already have one. Explain similarities and differences between a CV and a LinkedIn profile. You can also show them your LinkedIn profile to explain how you use it and what you have included in your profile, as an example. Please note that your mentee might not be initially comfortable setting up a public LinkedIn profile. LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers may have fled violence and wish to remain anonymous online due to security threats to them and their families. Please approach this topic sensitively and explain different privacy options to your mentee.
- d.** Explain that the overarching goal of CVs, LinkedIn profiles, and cover letters is to enable your mentee to make a strong impression with recruiters. Consider sharing a personal story to illustrate the importance of these materials.





- 
- e.** To set expectations, make sure to note that while having a strong CV and cover letter is essential, interviewing and networking skills – which you'll cover later in the year – are also critical to landing a job.
  - f.** If you have time, touch on email etiquette as it pertains to the job application process.

## **2. Edit your mentee's CV together**

- a.** Review your mentee's CV together and suggest edits as you go. Talk through the changes you're suggesting so that your mentee can understand why you are suggesting certain edits, without taking over the entire process. The mentee is in charge of their own CV.
- b.** Be sure to explain which CV components are critical, especially with regard to education and work experience.
- c.** It may be helpful to find somewhere on the CV to explicitly note that your mentee is authorised to work in the UK.
- d.** Discuss the pros and cons of being openly LGBTQ on your CV. This may include listing your pronouns or mentioning a job at or affiliation with an LGBTQ organisation under previous experiences. Please note that some mentees may not be comfortable incorporating personal details on their job application due to security risks or trauma.
- e.** Before you finish this exercise, make sure that your mentee is comfortable implementing your feedback independently following the meeting.

## **3. Edit your mentee's cover letter**

- a.** Explain how your mentee can use a cover letter to highlight skills and experiences that make them a strong candidate for a job. Be sure to note that each job application needs a unique cover letter specific to that opportunity and that in some instances a cover email may replace a cover letter.

- b.** Discuss best practices for cover letter writing in the UK and, if you have the relevant expertise, in your mentee's field of interest. Discuss strategies for incorporating personal elements, such as their LGBTQ or refugee identity, into a cover letter to highlight your mentee's resiliency and strength. Please note that some mentees may not be comfortable incorporating personal details on their job application due to security risks or trauma.
- c.** Review your mentee's sample cover letter. Provide feedback on their cover letter and explain why you are recommending each change. Focus only on feedback that would be transferable to future cover letters.
- d.** Before you finish this exercise, make sure that your mentee is comfortable implementing your feedback independently following the meeting.

### NEXT STEPS

- 1.** Ask your mentee to revise their CV and cover letter based on the feedback you shared with them during the meeting. Agree on a timeline for these revisions and ask them to send you the updated versions so that you can share any additional feedback.
- 2.** If you covered email etiquette in this session, consider sending practise emails that exemplify expected email communication style.
- 3.** If you're willing, offer to proofread their application materials to jobs or educational programmes they are applying for. This offer can be extended at any point throughout the programme.



# 03

## Meeting three: The interview process

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### Purpose of meeting

- ▲ Review interview fundamentals and skills
- ▲ Role play a mock interview

### Exercises

#### 1. Discuss the fundamentals of informational interviews and job interviews.

- a. Suggest helpful best practices for interviews. Share insights about how to answer questions in ways that highlight strong skills and experiences and how to avoid common interview faux pas. Discuss strategies for performing well in interviews in the UK, which may be different from expectations in your mentee's country of origin.
  - i. *Be sure to address punctuality. Different countries and cultures have varying expectations of what it means to be "on time," and it is important to convey the necessity of showing up early for an interview so that it can begin exactly when scheduled.*
  - ii. *We suggest sharing basic expectations around concepts such as personal appearance, hygiene, reliability, and good communication. Understanding the UK's norms and expectations about things like this can dramatically improve your mentee's preparedness for an interview.*
  - iii. *You may want to discuss the role of "small talk". Often interviewers may start the interview with small talk to build a connection with the interviewee before the interview, or to see how the applicant engages with new people.*
- b. Review proper dress code for your mentee's field(s) of interest. Every country and job field has different expectations for dress code based on their social norms and rules. For example, jeans and trainers might not be appropriate in some fields for a job interview. Discuss with your mentee what is the proper dress code for a business setting while leaving room for personal interpretations from their side. You can suggest local charity



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shops or other shops in the area that sell affordable business wear if cost is a concern. The mentor should not discourage any religious garments. .

- c.** Discuss being open about your LGBTQ identity in an interview setting.
  - i.* *What are some benefits and risks of disclosing aspects of your LGBTQ identity with an interviewer? Discuss appropriate ways to disclose your LGBTQ identity in an interview.*  
*Please note that your mentee might find interview settings triggering due to previous mistreatment from authority figures in their home country.*  
*Discuss different spectrums of openness in interviews – from feeling free to not broaching the topic of their sexuality and gender identity at all, to steps such as asking employers about their Diversity and Inclusion policies, through to being more open about their sexuality and gender identity.*
- d.** Discuss common challenges that refugees and asylum seekers face in an interview setting. How can your mentee best highlight their specific experiences and qualifications?
- e.** Discuss how to evaluate potential employers, including their commitment to LGBTQ-inclusive policies and workplaces. You can point your mentee to resources on employers with LGBTQ-inclusive policies and practices like these:
  - i.* Stonewall's [Workplace Equality Index \(UK\)](#)

## **2. Conduct a mock interview.**

- a.** Spend most of your meeting together practising interview skills. Affirm that this is a safe way for your mentee to practise what it's like to interview for a job and let them know that you will offer them feedback for how to improve their interviewing skills.
- b.** For a list of questions to use in your practise interview, we recommend utilising the Mock Interview Script 1 from My World of Work. Script 2 is an example of what NOT to answer during an interview. Review both and discuss. Make sure to tailor your questions and feedback to your mentee's field(s) of interest.

### 3. Following up on an interview.

- a. Talk about expected etiquette when following up with people after job interviews, including writing a thank you email.
- b. Discuss cultural norms regarding hearing back from a potential employer after an interview.
  - i. *How long should they expect to wait before hearing back from a company after an interview?*
  - ii. *What should they do if they have not heard back after a few weeks?*

#### NEXT STEPS

1. Your mentee may be interested in beginning to set up and conduct informational interviews. Arrange an informational interview – in person, by video call or by phone – between your mentee and one of your contacts working in their field of interest.
2. If relevant, offer to help your mentee prepare for upcoming interviews by email, by video conference, or by phone. This offer can be extended at any point throughout the programme.



# 04 Meeting four: **Networking**

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## **Purpose of meeting**

- ▲ Explain fundamentals of networking.
- ▲ Practise networking skills.
- ▲ Discuss aspects of networking that pertain to LGBTQ job seekers.

## **Exercises**

### **1. Create a networking strategy with your mentee**

- a. Get a sense of your mentee's professional and personal networks and discuss how these can be best utilised to advance their job search.
- b. Discuss cultural norms around networking, including reviewing the types of questions that would be helpful to ask and the role of small talk.

### **2. Conduct a mock networking session with your mentee**

- a. Pretend that you are having a casual conversation at a networking event. Have your mentee practise asking questions to learn about your work and finding opportunities to share more about their professional background and interests.
- b. Debrief on the mock networking session. Share feedback with your mentee and give them an opportunity to voice what felt comfortable or uncomfortable to them.

### **3. Discuss the experience of networking as an LGBTQ person**

- a. Share best practices for networking as an LGBTQ person and your own experience of coming out or not coming out when networking with professional contacts.

- 
- b.** Discuss how to utilise the LGBTQ community for networking purposes. Joining an LGBTQ professional association or social group (e.g., a sports team) can be a great way to build both social and professional connections.

#### **4. Discuss expectations for your relationship after the mentorship programme concludes**

- a.** Given that this will be the final formal meeting between you and your mentee, we recommend you discuss the nature of your communication moving forward.
- b.** Consider what you may or may not be able to offer in this relationship in the future. Can they contact you to serve as a reference? Are you available to proofread CVs or cover letters?
- c.** Are there people that you might be able to connect your mentee with?
- d.** Do you know of any upcoming networking events where they can practise their networking skills?

#### **NEXT STEP**

Let your mentee know that they may receive a post-mentorship survey from the organisation that referred them for this mentorship programme.





# Appendix



## Sample email for prospective mentors

*To be sent by mentorship coordinator*

Dear all,

I am writing to share an exciting opportunity: We have established a professional mentorship programme for LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers in our community and would love for you to be involved. We are now recruiting LGBTQ employees and allies at our company to serve as mentors for this programme. This is part of a larger initiative organised by the Tent Partnership for Refugees, Stonewall and Micro Rainbow that is being implemented at major companies in the UK. I will serve as the Mentorship Coordinator, planning logistics for the programme at [Company].

Mentoring an LGBTQ refugee or asylum seeker is an opportunity for you to support someone from one of the most vulnerable segments of the LGBTQ community and help them succeed in their careers. Mentors are expected to meet with their mentees at least four times over the course of a year, and will be responsible for arranging the logistics of these meetings. I will be providing you with suggested lesson plans for what to cover with your mentee, such as reviewing their CV and cover letter, and helping them develop their professional network.

If you are interested in participating in this mentorship programme, please fill out the survey link here [insert link]. Let us know if you have any questions about serving as a mentor. We hope that many of you will participate in this mentorship programme and learn from this wonderful experience!

Best,

[YOUR NAME]

## Recruitment survey for prospective mentors

*To be distributed by mentorship coordinator*

### **Thank you for your interest in serving as a mentor for an LGBTQ refugee or asylum seeker.**

The mentorship programme is focused on helping LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers identify their career goals and help them develop the skills and connections they need to thrive in the UK. You will work with your mentee on skills such as navigating workplace culture, writing a strong CV, practising interview techniques, and building a professional network.

The survey below is designed to match you with a mentee who has professional experiences and skills that match your interests. Once a match is made, you will work with your mentee over the course of one year, meeting at least four times. We will be in contact with you before and during the mentorship programme begins to offer more logistical information.

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### **Steps to begin the mentorship program:**

- Complete the survey below.
- We will then match you with an LGBTQ refugee or asylum seeker who will be your mentee, connect you with them, and send you the date of your first meeting. You should email your mentee in advance of the first meeting to show your enthusiasm for working together and confirm their attendance.
- Read the Guide for Mentors carefully, which provides you with best practices for stepping into a mentoring role. This guidebook includes a section on background information about working with LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers.



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### 1. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary
- I use my own term .....
- Prefer not to say

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### 2. Transgender is an umbrella term that refers to people whose gender identity, expression or behaviour is different from those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth. Other identities considered to fall under this umbrella can include non-binary, gender fluid, and genderqueer – as well as many more. Do you identify as transgender?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

---

### 3. What is your sexual orientation?

- Bi
- Gay
- Lesbian
- Heterosexual/straight
- I use another term .....
- I prefer not to say

---

**4. In what area of the UK do you currently live?**

- South East England
- South West England
- Greater London
- East of England
- West Midlands
- East Midlands
- Yorkshire and the Humber
- North West England
- North East England
- Wales
- Scotland
- Northern Ireland

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**5. What is your native language, what other language(s) do you speak, and to what degree of fluency?**

- English
- Urdu
- Bengali
- Malay
- Arabic
- Spanish
- Farsi
- French
- Other .....
- Other languages you speak and fluency (basic, intermediate or fluent):  
.....



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**6. In what sectors have you worked?**

.....

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**7. What is your current role at [Company]?**

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**8. Are you willing to commit to meeting with your mentee at least 4 times throughout the duration of the programme?**

- Yes
- No

---

**9. Would you prefer meeting virtually or in person?**

- Virtually
- In person

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**10. In a few sentences, please explain why you are interested in mentoring an LGBTQ refugee and what you expect from this mentorship programme and your mentee.**

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## Sample email for prospective mentees

*To be sent by your partner organisation*

Dear all,

I am thrilled to share an exciting opportunity for you to participate in a professional mentorship programme for LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers. The mentorship programme will enable you to receive one-on-one guidance and support from an LGBTQ professional or ally at a large company (OR name of a specific company) who can help you develop your career goals, strengthen your CV and cover letter, and expand your professional network. You will be expected to meet at least four times with a mentor over the course of one year.

If you are interested in participating in this mentorship programme, please fill out the survey link here [insert link]. Let us know if you have any questions about the programme. We hope that you will take advantage of this wonderful professional development opportunity!

Best,

[YOUR NAME]





## Recruitment survey template for prospective mentees

*To be distributed by staff at your partner organisation*

### **Thank you for your interest in participating in this mentorship programme for LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers.**

The survey below is designed to match you with a mentor from a large company (OR name of specific company) who has professional experiences and skills that match your interests. Once a match is made, you will work with your mentor, meeting at least four times over the course of one year (either virtually or at their office). A Mentorship Coordinator from your mentor's company will be in contact with you before and during the mentorship program to give you more logistical information.

---

### **Here are steps that you will need to take to participate in this mentorship programme:**

- Complete the survey below.
- Your survey responses will be shared with the staff at [Insert name of the mentor's company] so that they can match you with a mentor who shares your interests.
- The Mentorship Coordinator from [Insert name of mentor's company] will introduce you to your mentor via email and invite you to an initial meeting to get to know your mentor.

---

**1. What is your gender?**

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary
- I use my own term.....
- Prefer not to say

---

**2. Transgender is an umbrella term that refers to people whose gender identity, expression or behaviour is different from those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth. Other identities considered to fall under this umbrella can include non-binary, gender fluid, and genderqueer – as well as many more. Do you identify as transgender?**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

---

**3. What is your sexual orientation?**

- Bi
- Gay
- Lesbian
- Heterosexual/straight
- I use another term .....
- I prefer not to say

---

**4. In what area of the UK do you currently live?**

- South East England
- South West England
- Greater London



- East of England
- West Midlands
- East Midlands
- Yorkshire and the Humber
- North West England
- North East England
- Wales
- Scotland
- Northern Ireland

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**5. What is your native language?**

.....

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**6. What languages do you speak and to what degree of fluency?**

*(Please note basic, intermediate, or advanced.)*

- English
- Urdu
- Bengali
- Malay
- Arabic
- Spanish
- Farsi
- French
- Other .....

*Continued overleaf*

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**7. In what sectors have you worked?**

.....

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**8. What industries interest you in the UK?**

- Agriculture
- Communications and telecommunications
- Construction
- Finance and insurance
- Health and social care
- Manufacturing and production
- Non-profits
- Real estate, renting, and leasing
- Retail
- Services industry
- State and local government
- Technology
- Other .....

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**9. Please write 3-5 sentences about your career goals and ideal job/s.**

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**10. What are you looking for in a mentor? Please write 3-5 sentences?**

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**11. Would you prefer meeting virtually or in person?**

- Yes
- No

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**12. Do you have access to regular wifi?**

- Yes
- No

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**13. Do you have access to unlimited mobile data?**

- Yes
- No

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**14. Do you have access to a computer?**

- Yes
- No

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**15. Do you have access to a printer?**

- Yes
- No



## Optional post-programme survey for mentors

*To be distributed by Mentorship Coordinator*

### **Congratulations on finishing your year-long mentorship role!**

We hope that you had a positive experience working with your mentee and that you were able to share insights to help them advance their careers. The attached survey asks questions about your experience over the course of the programme.

Please answer with as much detail as you can in order to help us understand how to best run this programme in the future.

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**For the first questions, please share as much as much information as you are comfortable with.**

**1.** Did you enjoy participating in this mentorship programme? Why or why not?

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**2.** What was your relationship like with your mentee?

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**3.** How did your mentee grow over the course of the programme?  
How did you grow over the course of the programme?

Lined writing area for question 3, consisting of 10 horizontal blue dotted lines.

**4.** What were some of your mentee's biggest successes?

Lined writing area for question 4, consisting of 10 horizontal blue dotted lines.



**5.** What were some of your mentee’s biggest challenges? If any, what were some of your own challenges?

Lined area for response to question 5.

**6.** How could this mentorship program be improved for future cohorts?

Lined area for response to question 6.







---

**For the following questions, answer on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being extremely unsatisfactory and 10 being extremely satisfactory.**

*Please feel free to add comments to each answer.*

**To what extent:**

Were you able to respond to your mentee's specific questions?

Score ...../10

.....

Did you witness goal-oriented growth in your mentee?

Score ...../10

.....

Did you feel that your mentee developed an understanding of workplace norms?

Score ...../10

.....

Were you able to help your mentee develop a stronger professional network?

Score ...../10

.....

Did your mentee grow as an interviewee?

Score ...../10

.....

Did you find the structure of the program to be helpful?

Score ...../10

.....

Were you able to rely upon your company's mentorship coordinator in order to address questions or issues related to your experience mentoring?

Score ...../10

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Were you able to use insight from other mentors?

Score ...../10

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Was your mentee punctual and prepared for your meetings?

Score ...../10

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Was your mentee committed to taking this program seriously?

Score ...../10

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Would you serve as a mentor for a new cohort of LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers?

Score ...../10

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Would you encourage your peers to serve as mentors for LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers in the future?

Score ...../10

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## Optional post-program survey for mentees

*To be distributed by staff at your partner organisation*

### **Congratulations on completing the year-long mentorship programme!**

We hope that your experience provided you with valuable insights about searching for jobs and developing a professional network. The attached survey asks questions about your experience in this programme. Please answer with as much detail as you can in order to help us understand how to best run this programme in the future.

---

#### **Please answer these questions with Yes or No:**

	Yes	No
1. Were you employed at the beginning of their mentorship program?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Were you employed by the end of this mentorship program?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Did you find a new job over the course of the mentorship program?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Do you feel that this mentorship program helped you identify and secure a better job?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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#### **Please share 2-4 sentences to answer each question.**

1. In what ways was your mentor most helpful?

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2. Which subjects were most helpful to learn about with your mentor?

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3. What were some of your biggest successes in working with your mentor?

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4. What were some of your biggest challenges in working with your mentor?

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5. How could this mentorship experience be improved?

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**6.** Were there enough meetings over the course of the year?

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**7.** Are there topics that were not covered that would have been helpful to you?

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**8.** What topics needed a greater focus/time than others?

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**For the following questions, answer on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being extremely unsatisfactory and 10 being extremely satisfactory.**

*Please feel free to add comments to each answer.*

Was your mentor responsive to your specific questions?

Score ...../10

---

Did your mentor help you set realistic, achievable career goals?

Score ...../10

---

Do you feel you achieved some of your set career goals?

Score ...../10

---

Did your mentor offer advice to help you achieve those career goals?

Score ...../10

---

Did you feel that your mentor cared about your professional success?

Score ...../10

---

Did your mentor help you better understand the job market and workplace norms in the UK?

Score ...../10

---

Did your mentor advise you in drafting a strong CV?

Score ...../10

---



Did your mentor advise you in drafting strong cover letters?

Score ...../10

---

Did your mentor provide you with ideas to help you in your job search?

Score ...../10

---

Was your understanding of networking enhanced?

Score ...../10

---

Have your interviewing skills improved?

Score ...../10

---

Have you learned about cultural norms related to workplaces in the UK?

Score ...../10

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Did your mentor help you develop a stronger professional network?

Score ...../10

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Did you feel that the program was well organised?

Score ...../10

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# Annex





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## **Safeguarding guidance for mentors:**

Safeguarding is an important component of this mentorship programme and it's vital that mentors understand the safeguarding procedures in place . Safeguarding relates to how you behave as a mentor in prioritising the wellbeing of your mentee, as well as ensuring that you are equipped to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and harm, respond to disclosures of abuse and harm, and, if necessary, report those in the right ways to ensure that your mentee can remain safe and well. The safeguarding information provided below will also help you develop a healthy, constructive, and productive partnership with your mentee.

### **What is safeguarding?**

Safeguarding, under The Care Act (2014), means protecting children and vulnerable adults' right to live in safety, free from abuse, and neglect. A safeguarding risk involves an allegation or concern that a person has or may have behaved in a way that has harmed themselves or another person or behaved towards someone in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to others. This safeguarding annex aims to provide you with necessary information about your responsibilities as a mentor to safeguard your mentee, and share some practical information about identifying, reporting, and handling safeguarding concerns, challenging conversations, or any other associated risk of harm.

Your mentee may choose to share information with you about harm and abuse that they have previously experienced. This safeguarding annex information relates only to things that are an immediate or current risk to your mentee's safety and wellbeing. However, there is also information in this annex guide about how to sensitively respond to disclosures of previous trauma.

Whilst this annex guide will support you specifically with safeguarding your mentee, you should also familiarise yourself with your own organisation's safeguarding policy, and identify the safeguarding lead at the partner organisation that referred your mentee to participate in this mentorship programme, should you ever need to escalate a safeguarding concern.

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### **Do I need a criminal record check to be a mentor on this programme?**

Your organisation should have its own safeguarding policy which will outline the process around criminal record checks. We recommend that all mentors undergo a basic criminal record check when participating in this programme. The cost for this should be covered by your employer and you can find more details [here](#). If you or the applicant for a criminal record check are not UK nationals, please use [this link](#).

### **Are LGBTQ refugees considered “vulnerable adults” or “adults at risk”?**

Safeguarding means protecting children and adults at risk from harm, abuse and neglect. The systems and laws governing child protection and Adults at Risk (known as Vulnerable Groups in Scotland) are slightly different across the four nations in the UK (England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland) but based on the same principles.

This programme is only focused on mentees that are over the age of 18. Being an LGBTQ refugee in itself is not part of the criteria to identify vulnerable adults. However, LGBTQ refugees may experience additional circumstances which may mean that they are considered a vulnerable adult. For the purposes of this programme, safeguarding procedures will be applied at all times, regardless of the disclosure of any of the items below.

Examples of causes that may contribute to someone being considered an adult at risk are:

- Having an illness affecting their mental or physical health
- Having a learning disability
- Having drug or alcohol dependencies
- Being frail



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## Recognising a safeguarding concern

There are several ways you may come to recognise a safeguarding concern. Common examples include:

- The person experiencing the abuse may tell you directly or show you signs or examples of abuse in person, on the phone, or through email or other forms of contact. Sometimes the term used to describe this is 'making a disclosure.'
- Someone else may tell you or show you signs or examples of abuse that they have seen, heard, or been told about your mentee.
- You may observe signs of abuse (see below) or witness the behaviours of others that could be an indication of abuse.

Be mindful that, for many mentees, English may not be their first language. Therefore, give your mentee the space and time to finish what they're saying, and then you can clarify what you've heard. Here are the steps you should take if you think your mentee is disclosing a safeguarding concern:

1. Before the individual goes into detail, explain that in order to keep them safe and ensure they have access to the right support, they can contact the safeguarding lead at the organisation that referred them to participate in this mentorship programme.
2. Please explain that you will also need to pass the information on if you believe that they are at risk of harm.
3. If the person continues to disclose, listen to the disclosure, and acknowledge what has been disclosed.
4. Find a sensitive way to store and contain the disclosure.
5. Make sure you follow the recording and reporting procedures outlined later in the document, so that the disclosure is picked up by the appropriate safeguarding lead and your mentee is kept safe.

---

## What are the signs of abuse that I should be aware of?

The statutory guidance to the Care Act 2014 (England and Wales) and Adult Support & Protection 2017 (Scotland) identifies ten categories of harm that mentors should be aware of:

- 1. Self-neglect:** This covers a wide range of behaviour, including neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene and/or health
- 2. Modern Slavery:** This encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude.
- 3. Domestic Abuse:** This includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse perpetrated by anyone within a person's family. It also includes so-called 'honour' based violence.
- 4. Discriminatory:** Discrimination is abuse which centres on a difference or perceived difference particularly with respect to race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability or any of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010.
- 5. Organisational:** This includes neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting, such as a hospital or care home,, or in relation to care provided in one's own home.
- 6. Physical:** This includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.
- 7. Sexual:** This includes rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.



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- 8. Financial or material:** This includes theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
  - 9. Neglect/Acts of omission:** This includes ignoring medical or physical care needs, failing to provide access to appropriate health social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
  - 10. Emotional or psychological:** This includes threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

### **What can be signs of adults at risk of abuse or neglect?**

In mentoring relationships, mentors strive to create environments of trust and support people to be their authentic selves. Mentors may be the only person someone has felt able to talk to about their experience of abuse, and the information mentors hold may be the missing piece of the jigsaw for statutory services. Things to look out for include:

- Changes to someone's appearance, behaviour or routines
- Weight gain or loss
- Appearing frightened in the presence of certain people
- Unexplained lack of money or inability to maintain lifestyle
- Appearing withdrawn and isolated
- Unexplained marks or bruising to the body

## Responding

Although mentors should not push for information regarding their mentee's refugee journey, mentees may choose to share parts of their personal story with you. In order to best support your mentee and assess whether there are any ongoing safeguarding concerns, you should consider how you might respond in this situation.

✓ DO	× DON'T
Do let them share what they want to - this may be difficult for them to talk about, so don't interrupt them.	Don't stop them from talking.
Do take a breath before you respond.	Don't react strongly (e.g., saying 'that's terrible' or 'that's awful').
Do thank them for sharing with you.	Don't promise confidentiality.
Do listen carefully and take it seriously	Don't jump to conclusions about the alleged abuser(s).
Do get a sense of urgency or risk if you can (such as timing – is this happening right now, or before they settled in the UK?). If it's happening right now, follow the safeguarding procedures outlined in this guide.	Don't ask leading questions or try or investigate the concern yourself.



<p>If you feel that they, or someone close to them is at risk, explain that you will need to discuss this with the safeguarding lead at your partner organisation who will be able to advise you on what you might be able to do to get further support.</p>	<p>Don't make promises you cannot keep (e.g., 'I will help make sure it doesn't happen again').</p>
<p>Do follow our guidelines for how to respond, record and report safeguarding concerns.</p>	<p>Don't share the personal data or breach confidentiality of the individual with anyone other than the safeguarding contact at your partner organisation.</p>
<p>Do tell your organisation's Safeguarding Lead that you have recognised, responded and reported a safeguarding concern so that they can support you (without sharing the data of the individual or breaching confidentiality).</p>	
<p>Do seek support if you need to talk about anything distressing you may have heard. Your wellbeing as a mentor is important.</p>	

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### **Recording safeguarding concerns:**

It is essential that you record in written form any safeguarding concerns as soon as they arise. Make a note of everything you have been told and/or observed. It's important to do this quickly and to not rely on memory, as it's very easy to forget important details. You'll need to pass this to the point of contact at the organisation that referred your mentee as soon as possible.

Be sure to:

- Write down the facts, not your opinion
- Wherever possible, note the time, date, location, and names (ideally full names) of the people involved
- Try to record the exact words that the person used, not your interpretation of their words
- Keep the record safe, such as in a password protected file
- If the concern or disclosure has been emailed to you, save it or forward it on to the safeguarding contact at your partner organisation

### **Taking notes**

It is a good idea to keep brief notes of your meetings with your mentee, so that you can reflect on any actions and plan for your next meeting. Always ask your mentee if they're happy for you to make short notes before you write or log anything. These notes should be brief, and not mention names or any identifiable criteria. Save them in a password protected file when you're finished.

There can be high safety risk for your mentee in case of a data breach. For example, if their sexuality and/or gender identity becomes widely known and they are later returned to their country of origin, they can experience increased persecution, including imprisonment or death. Avoid recording information that is not essential to your mentorship relationship.





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You should be fully compliant with your own organisation's GDPR processes at all times. Any data you receive or that is shared regarding your mentee should be managed in line with GDPR guidelines and the Data Protection Act 2018.

### **Code of conduct**

When working closely with anyone in a one-to-one capacity, it's a good idea to have an agreement to ensure that you're all comfortable with how, when, and why you're communicating and working together. In your first meeting, we suggest you agree and/or discuss the following in addition to the curriculum content provided in the main guide:

- That you have read and understood the full code of conduct below
- Most appropriate mode of contact (e.g. WhatsApp, email) , and the best time of the day for you to hold your meetings
- Which pronouns to use for your mentee and yourself
- Your boundaries around connecting on social media. We strongly suggest that you communicate through phone, text, and email, rather than social media
- Our responsibilities are as a mentor; you cannot guarantee employment as a result of your mentorship.
- That you cannot promise confidentiality if you are ever worried about your or your mentee's safety

**The code of conduct below is mandatory for all mentors to read and understand.**

✓ YOU MUST	✗ YOU MUST NOT
<p>Respect and celebrate difference (e.g., do not discourage religious dress or concealment of any aspect of their identity).</p>	<p>Discriminate against anyone on the grounds of gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, race, country of origin, age, or ability. This also includes making assumptions and applying stereotypes</p>
<p>Treat mentees with warmth and empathy, and listen to their wishes and feelings even if they do not resonate with your own.</p>	<p>Engage in any form of sexual or romantic relationship with your mentee. This includes engaging with or allowing sexualized, suggestive, or provocative language, as well as behaviour. Anyone found doing so will be removed from the programme with immediate effect, and their employer will be notified.</p>
<p>Behave in a calm, positive, supportive and encouraging way at all times.</p>	<p>Ask intrusive questions about your mentee’s past experiences, their journey to becoming a refugee in the UK, or any other situation which may elicit traumatic feelings or memories.</p>
<p>Report any safeguarding suspicions, concerns, allegations or disclosures made by a mentee. See the reporting section for more information.</p>	<p>Maintain confidentiality about information which indicates that the mentee or those in close proximity to them are at risk of serious harm.</p>



<p>Ensure the relationship with a mentee that you have met through this programme remains professional at all times. The aim should never be to develop an intimate relationship.</p>	<p>Share your home address or encourage the mentee to share theirs. We recommend that you use your work phone and email address to contact your mentee where possible.</p>
<p>Respect an adult at risk's right to personal privacy but never agree to keep any information relating to their potential harm confidential.</p>	<p>Arrange a meeting where the purpose is not focused on supporting your mentee to access work or professional opportunities.</p>
<p>Be aware that mentees can develop infatuations (crushes) towards mentors. If this is happening, you should inform your safeguarding contact, then respond to the situation in a way that maintains the dignity of all concerned.</p>	<p>Photograph or film your mentee, or share photos and films of your mentee, without consent.</p>
<p>Agree on appropriate channels and times to contact your mentee (e.g., email or phone), and at what time of day/day of the week.</p>	<p>Investigate any safeguarding concerns or allegations yourself. Always use the process outlined in this document to document your safeguarding concerns and pass them to the appropriate point of contact.</p>

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<p>Be mindful to limit the personal information you share with mentees. If information of a personal nature is disclosed, the mentor should be clear about why they have done so and think through how they will respond to further questions/ interest should it arise. Remember to ask yourself why you are disclosing information and what, if any, are the implications for the mentee who knows it.</p>	<p>Borrow/lend money to or from mentees, nor should you sell things to or buy things from mentees. You should also not accept gifts from mentees. However, if at the end of your mentorship, either of you would like to say 'thank you', then a card is appropriate.</p>
<p>Read and understand the safeguarding procedures outlined in this document.</p>	<p>Accept, either for yourself or your family, free services from mentees where such services should normally be charged for.</p>
	<p>Serve as a witness for a mentee's will or be named as one of their executors.</p>
	<p>Rely on your position at the company to protect you if you do not follow the Code of Conduct.</p>



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