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UK

# Tent UK working group: hiring refugees

OCTOBER, 2024



# Welcome

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*UK CEO  
The Adecco Group*

# Agenda

1. **Presentation of the *UK Employers' Guide to Hiring Refugees* – developed in collaboration with the Refugee Council**
  - Jen Stobart, Director, Tent UK
  - Matt Caines, Associate Director, Research & Best Practices, Tent
  - Duncan Wells, Head of Resettlement, Refugee Council
2. **Breakout discussions: best practices for hiring refugees**
3. **Networking**



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# Introducing the *UK* *Employers'* *Guide to Hiring* *Refugees*

*Matthew Caines, Associate Director,  
Research & Best Practices, Tent*



## Resource overview

The ***UK Employers' Guide to Hiring Refugees*** is a manual for companies that are interested in hiring refugees – it includes:

- A factsheet on refugees
- The business benefits of hiring refugees
- Practical information about checking and confirming refugees' right to work
- A list of refugee-facing organisations that companies interested in hiring refugees can connect with
- Links to relevant best practice resources



# Refugees in the UK

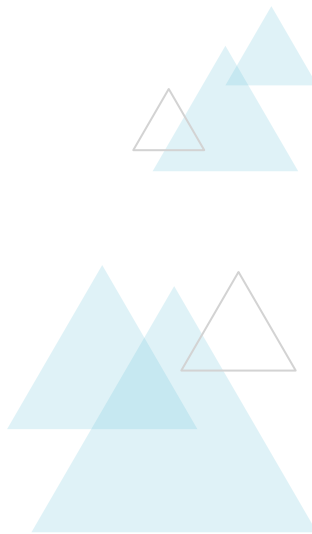
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The UK currently hosts **600,000+ refugees** from all over the world.

The largest populations of refugees currently hosted in the UK come from **Ukraine, Hong Kong, and Afghanistan.**

In the UK, a refugee will either have had:

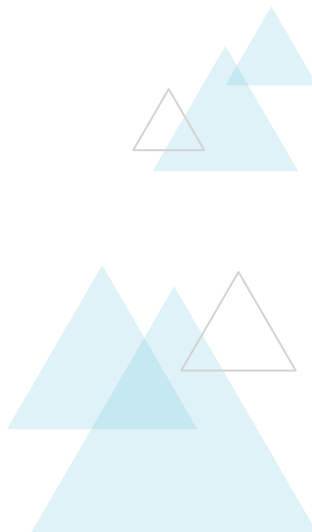
- Their application for asylum accepted by the UK government;
- Been relocated to the UK via a global UNHCR resettlement scheme;
- Been brought to the UK by a partner or parent via the Family Reunion Scheme;
- Had their application for a country-specific scheme for individuals seeking protection accepted.



## Claiming asylum in the UK <sup>(1/2)</sup>

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- By the end of June 2024, **64% of asylum seekers** had been **waiting for more than six months** on an initial decision.
- In the year ending June 2024, **75,000+ asylum applications** were made in the UK.
- The top three countries of origin of people seeking asylum were **Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan**.
- Asylum seekers are not allowed to work.



## Claiming asylum in the UK (2/2)

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The possible outcomes of an asylum claim are:

1. Grant of refugee status
2. Grant of humanitarian protection
3. Grant of other leave
4. Refusal

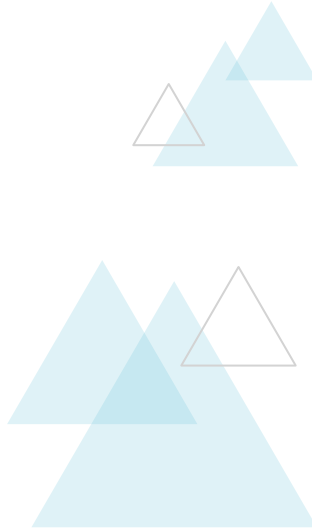
*In the year ending June, 67,000+ people were granted refugee status or other protection in the UK.*



## Other immigration pathways

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- ✓ Global UNHCR resettlement schemes: UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS); Community Sponsorship; Mandate Scheme
- ✓ Family Reunion Scheme
- ✓ Country-specific schemes for individuals seeking protection:
  - Ukraine protection schemes
  - Hong Kong British National (Overseas) scheme
  - Afghanistan protection schemes



## Ukrainian refugees: overview

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European countries west of Ukraine hosting 4-5 million Ukrainian refugees.

National schemes:

- Ukraine Family Scheme
- “Homes for Ukraine”
- Ukraine Extension Scheme
- Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme

As of March 2024, the UK is hosting 250,000+ Ukrainian refugees.

## Ukrainian refugees: profile

- **90% of Ukrainian refugees** are estimated to be **women and children**.
- Ukrainian refugees are **highly educated**.
- **69% of Ukrainian refugees** in the UK are **employed or self-employed**; **36%** (including those already in employment) are actively **looking for work**.
- **Barriers to employment:** language barriers (53%); caring responsibilities (20%); qualification recognition (16%); mismatches between jobs and skills/experience (14%).
- **Languages spoken:** Ukrainian (98%); Russian (88%); English (50%); German (16%); Polish (15%).



## BN(O) Hong Kongers: overview

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The Hong Kong “British National (Overseas)” visa route provides BN(O) Hong Kongers with the ability to come to the UK to live, work, and study.

140,000 BN(O) Hong Kongers are estimated to have arrived in the UK since the beginning of 2021.

## BN(O) Hong Kongers: profile

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- **Equal gender balance.**
- **More highly educated than the average** person in both Hong Kong and the UK.
- While 92% of BN(O) Hong Kongers in the UK are aged between 25 and 64, **only half are working**, and **18% are unemployed**.
- **Jobs do not match skills/experience:** at all (27%); “only a little” (20%).
- **Barriers to employment:** language confidence (41%); qualification recognition (19%).
- **Spoken English:** 53% good; 11% very good; 36% poor.



## Afghan refugees: overview

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### National schemes:

- Afghan Citizens Replacement Scheme (“ACRS”)
- Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (“ARAP”)

As of May 2024, 15,000+ Afghans have been welcomed under ARAP, and 11,000+ under ACRS.

The number of Afghans claiming asylum in the UK has increased since the fall of Kabul.

## Afghan refugees: profile

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- **Education:** 56% have a degree (25% postgraduate; 31% undergraduate); 24% have a high school education; 20% have less than a high school education.
- **Employment:** 38% are employed, 61% are looking for employment, and one in two Afghan women are not looking for work.
- **English language proficiency:** 16% fluent; 14% proficient; 26% conversational; 25% basic; 19% “none”.



## Educational and professional backgrounds

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Refugees, regardless of their country of origin, come to the UK with a wide variety of professional experiences, educational backgrounds, and skills:

- Some arrive with high levels of education and strong work histories.
- Others come to the UK with mid-level education and/or skills.
- Some arrive with little to no formal education, work history, or English language proficiency.

*There can be vast differences in refugees' education and employment backgrounds, which is often dependent on their country of origin.*



# Barriers to employment

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- The “biggest barrier” to getting a job: learning English (33%); “travelling to job interviews” (5%)



*For information and guidance, visit Tent's Members' Hub at <https://www.tent.org/member-resources/>*

- Housing: a refugee's ability to access employment is affected if they do not know where they will be living in the long term.

## Other chapters of note

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- Why Hire Refugees?
- How To Hire Refugees
- Connecting with Refugee Talent
  - Tent UK can connect you with a range of organisations that can help to source refugee talent.
  - We can also advise you on how to source refugee candidates directly.



*For more information, get in touch with the Tent UK team.*

## Key takeaways

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- 1.** Refugees come to the UK via different and varied immigration pathways.
- 2.** Language barriers are a key challenge to refugees finding and securing work.
- 3.** Refugees, regardless of their country of origin, come to the UK with a wide variety of professional experiences, educational backgrounds, and skills – *and can therefore provide tremendous value to a variety of employers!*

