



TENT

Recruiting Refugee Talent



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Tent updates beginning of Oct to Dec

- Launched Tent España and Tent France
- Held London refugee focused job fair in partnership with Indeed, DWP and UNHCR – 50 companies and nearly 1000 job seekers
- Spoke at the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance conference about 'How the hospitality sector can integrate refugees into their workforce'
- Launched the UK tailored Members' Hub section



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By the end of this presentation, you will:

- ▲ Know the benefits of hiring refugees.
- ▲ Understand challenges faced by refugee job seekers.
- ▲ Know how to modify your CV screening and interview processes to make them more inclusive to refugee candidates.
- ▲ Preview some of the issues you might encounter post-hire and how to address those.

Poll: Have you intentionally hired refugee candidates into your UK teams?



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Who is a refugee?

- ▲ A **refugee** is someone who has been forced to flee their country because of a well-founded fear of persecution or violence, e.g. a civil war or political persecution.
- ▲ An **asylum seeker** is someone who has left their country and has formally applied for refugee status in your country but is waiting for an official determination by the government.

Who would be considered a refugee?

- ▲ Someone fleeing the war in Ukraine.
- ▲ Someone fleeing the crisis in Afghanistan.
- ▲ Someone fleeing civil war in Syria.
- ▲ Someone fleeing political persecution in Hong Kong.
- ▲ Someone who is LGBTQ fleeing persecution in Iran.
- ▲ Someone fleeing persecution in Eritrea for protesting for democracy.

Over 400,000 displaced people in the UK

The UK is hosting

**130,000
refugees**

predominantly from
Afghanistan, Iran,
Iraq, Eritrea and Syria



In addition to

**248,000
Ukrainians**



**52,000
Hongkongers**



Source: UNHCR

Why hire refugees?

In addition to changing the course of a refugee's life, there are also business reasons to hire refugees:

- ▲ Refugee employees have lower turnover than other workers.*
- ▲ Refugees are considered to be exceptionally motivated, resilient, and loyal employees.
- ▲ Refugees are typically more willing to relocate for decent work.
- ▲ Refugees make your workforce more diverse, which drives innovation and financial performance, among other benefits.**
- ▲ Consumers are more likely to buy from brands that hire refugees***

"Refugees provide us with an amazing talent pool – they're skilled, dedicated, loyal and engaged."

— Rohini Anand, Former SVP of
Corporate Responsibility & Global
Chief Diversity Officer

Sodexo

*A study found that, for example, in the manufacturing sector, refugees turn over at 4 percent per year, compared to 11 percent for others (Fiscal Policy Institute, *Refugees As Employees: Good Retention, Strong Recruitment*, 2017). ** Studies have found that diversity unlocks innovation, drives market growth, and increases financial performance (Harvard Business Review, *How Diversity Can Drive Innovation*, 2012; Harvard Business Review, *The Other Diversity Dividend*, 2018). *** In Tent's 2023 pan-Europe research report, *How Hiring Refugees Helps Brands*, 45% of the 800+ consumers surveyed across all political views and ages in the UK indicated they are more likely to purchase from brands that hire refugees. Only 11% said that they were less likely to buy, showing that 4 times as many consumers in the UK support rather than oppose brands taking this action.

Why should I adapt my company's recruitment practices for refugees?

Refugees face structural barriers when trying to enter the workforce, making them seem less competitive in a standard recruitment process. For example,

- ▲ Refugees may be unfamiliar with online job boards where your positions are advertised.
- ▲ They may lack professional networks to access job opportunities or connect them to employers.
- ▲ And when refugees apply, they may be inadvertently screened out because of gaps in their CV or foreign education and certifications are unfamiliar to your HR department.

While a refugee candidate might be a good fit for the job, they may not succeed in a conventional hiring process.

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How to recruit refugee candidates

This section will cover:

- ▲ Working with local partners.
- ▲ Advertising vacancies through refugee community networks.
- ▲ Refugee focused job fairs.



Working with local partners

Refugee job seekers may not be aware of vacancies at your company:

- ▲ Recently-arrived refugees typically aren't tapped into professional or social networks to link them to jobs.
- ▲ They may also not be aware of common ways of finding jobs in their new country, such as online job boards or platforms.

Working with local partner/s can help you to reach refugee job seekers, so they don't miss out on opportunities at your company.

Watch out: Most potential local partners will focus on a specific city or region, rather than on an entire country. If you need support more broadly across the UK, you may need to work with multiple partners. Tent can help facilitate this!

Why should my company work with a local partner?

- ▲ It's the most efficient way of building a pipeline of refugee candidates.
- ▲ In some cases, local partners can pre-screen and provide a shortlist of refugee applicants for the roles you are looking to fill.
- ▲ Some organisations may also offer other support services for your refugee hires, including language training.

Building local partnerships

Partnerships built on trust and shared values are vital.

You'll want to be sure that the organisation/s you choose to work with understand/s your operational needs and is/are able to help you recruit the best candidates.

Steps for kickstarting successful local partnerships:

- ▲ Reach out to Tent to help you identify organisations in your locations of interest.
- ▲ With Tent's help, determine which organisations can best meet your company's needs and get introduced.
- ▲ Connect with the organisation/s directly to confirm that they have the services and capabilities to meet your specific needs.
- ▲ Consider running a pilot with the organisation, then scale up to a longer-term partnership, incorporating learnings along the way.

Building local partnerships: UK Connections

Refugee Employability Programme (REP) Providers:

- ▲ Reed in Partnership
- ▲ The Growth Company
- ▲ Maximus
- ▲ Palladium
- ▲ Get Set
- ▲ Twin Training
- ▲ The International Rescue Committee (IRC)

NGOs:

- ▲ Refugee Council
- ▲ Renaisi
- ▲ Breaking Barriers
- ▲ World Jewish Relief
- ▲ Scottish Refugee Council
- ▲ Welsh Refugee Council
- ▲ Code Your Future

Department for Work and Pensions – National Employers Partnerships Team & Job Centre Plus

Advertising vacancies through community networks

Refugee communities are often tight-knit, so it may be possible for you to market job opportunities to them directly, in addition to working with local partners on outreach:

- ▲ Refugee community networks could include word-of-mouth networks and social media groups.
- ▲ Translating job descriptions into the local languages of refugees e.g. Ukrainian or Arabic in your area may also help.

In some cases, 'marketing' through refugee community networks may be organic – research shows that if a refugee has a positive experience with an employer, other members of their community are likely to seek employment at the same company.*

*A study of companies in the United States found that organisations that hire refugees experience positive recruitment effects (Fiscal Policy Institute, *Refugees As Employees: Good Retention, Strong Recruitment*, 2017).

Attending local refugee focused job fairs

These events give companies an opportunity to recruit refugee candidates who may struggle when applying for positions through traditional recruitment channels due to their unfamiliarity with the local job seeking process and/or lack of professional networks.

By meeting refugee applicants in person and interacting with them in a more comfortable setting, companies can identify qualified refugee candidates who might have otherwise been overlooked.

Considerations

Train recruiters to interview refugee candidates before the job fair

Come prepared to overcome language barriers

Set clear expectations with applicants on work culture and role expectations

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Hiring programmes specifically targeting refugee candidates

A company committing to hire a certain number of refugees does *not* mean that it would affirmatively preference refugees over other qualified candidates.

It is a pledge to reduce the barriers that stand in the way of qualified refugees entering the workforce. A company saying that it will hire X number of refugees means that it is committing to invest sufficient company resources to overcome barriers such as:

- ▲ CV gaps or unfamiliar credentials.
- ▲ A lack of professional networks and inexperience in a country's workplace.
- ▲ A lack of transportation or language barriers.

Removing these barriers enables qualified refugee candidates to find jobs and businesses to benefit from hiring skilled refugee talent – including **higher retention rates**, **increased diversity**, and a **strengthened brand** and reputation!

Adapting the recruitment process

You should plan to adapt your standard process for assessing a candidate's suitability for the job or placement to make it more accessible for refugee candidates. Luckily, some of the most effective things you can do are likely already part of your process!

- ▲ Ensure that your standard recruitment process is focused as much as possible on assessing the **candidate's behaviour, attributes** and **potential** to do the job.
- ▲ Evaluate **skills** and **competence** during on-the-job training through skills profiling tools.
- ▲ Test for any **technical skills** that are a prerequisite for doing the job (*for example, numeracy, computer skills, experience operating heavy machinery, or business-level written English*).
- ▲ **Manage expectations** about the nature of the work. Consider providing a workplace tour as part of the recruitment process, to ensure candidates understand what the job entails.

Challenge your team to assess the level of English that's *required* for the role, and then tailor the interview process accordingly.

Some refugee candidates, especially those who have recently arrived in the UK, may not be proficient in English. Many companies require a level of English proficiency in the interview process that is higher than that required for the work itself.

Navigating language barriers in the recruitment process

You can use the following strategies to help overcome language barriers during the recruitment process:

- ▲ See if your local partner/s can assist with interpretation and paperwork completion for the initial screening and interviews.
- ▲ Ensure clear communication by speaking slower, not louder, and avoiding colloquial language (*for example, avoid phrases like “give it a shot” or “it’s a piece of cake”*).
- ▲ Instead of asking yes/no questions, check for understanding by asking clarifying questions (*for example, ask “What time is your next interview taking place?” instead of “Do you know what time your next interview takes place?”*).



The CV review

When reviewing refugee candidates' CV's, be mindful of factors linked to their status, such as:

- ▲ Gaps in employment.
- ▲ Mismatched or out-of-date skills and experience.
- ▲ Lack of local experience or references.
- ▲ Lack of familiarity with job application norms in the UK.

As you review, do your best to:

- ▲ Determine if and how gaps in experience can be managed.
- ▲ Evaluate if overseas work history or qualifications could indicate candidates' potential or relevant skills and experience.
- ▲ Consider using an independent agency or online resources to verify educational and skills equivalence from foreign institutions.*

*Resources such UK ENIC (UK's National Information Centre for global qualifications and skills) will verify educational and skills equivalence from institutions across the globe - <https://www.enic.org.uk/>

Do not reject a person for an entry level job solely because they appear 'overqualified'.

- ▲ Many highly skilled refugees are unable to practice their profession when they are resettled and seek out lower-skilled roles.
- ▲ These candidates may decide to eventually leave to resume a career in their former fields – or they may be great candidates for fast-tracked responsibilities.

Adapting the recruitment process

As you schedule and conduct interviews, try to:

- ▲ Train interviewers to be aware of their unconscious biases and give them tools and information to overcome these, such as background information on refugees.
- ▲ Consider diversity when composing interview panels to further mitigate unconscious biases.
- ▲ Encourage strong two-way communication between interviewers and candidates to ensure they fully understand each other. Do not assume that refugee candidates' silence is confirmation of their understanding.
- ▲ Explain to interviewers that refugee candidates may not always adhere to certain norms – especially those concerning body language – and that this is a sign of cultural differences, not disrespect. *(For example, some cultures do not practice eye contact or handshakes between men and women.)*
- ▲ Be open about the local business culture and ensure that candidates are comfortable with the behavioural expectations at your workplace.

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Addressing challenges for refugee employees

If you're looking to recruit refugee talent, you're probably also thinking about how you can support refugee employees post-hire. This final section covers employers' most frequent areas of interest:

- ▲ Overcoming language barriers on the job.
- ▲ Addressing cultural differences.
- ▲ Accounting for transportation issues.

Note that challenges related to the topics above are usually resolved within a few months, once employees are acclimated to their new role and workplace!



Overcoming language barriers on the job



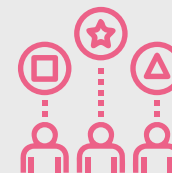
Many refugees will not be fluent in English when they join your company. But that doesn't mean that they can't start contributing right away!

In fact, there are plenty of workarounds that you can put in place to support your refugee employees as they build up proficiency in English, including:

- ▲ Translating signage and other critical materials into Ukrainian or Arabic.
- ▲ Getting bilingual colleagues to help with interpretation.
- ▲ To learn more, check out Tent's training on ***How to Overcome Language Barriers***

Did you know that the workplace is almost always the best place for refugees to improve their local language skills? You may end up being pleasantly surprised by how quickly employees improve!

Addressing cultural differences



Some employers may be concerned about managing cultural differences in the workplace. By taking certain steps, companies can create a culturally inclusive environment from the start:

- ▲ Matching new refugee employees with 'buddies' or co-workers that can help address the new hire's questions relating to the company's culture.
- ▲ Consider making accommodations for refugee employees, e.g. aligning break times with prayer times or adjusting your uniform policies to accommodate cultural norms around appropriate clothing.

Some refugee employees may need to be told that it is acceptable to speak up and ask clarifying questions. In this case, co-workers should know to check in with their refugee colleagues and encourage this behaviour.

Accounting for transportation issues



Some refugee candidates may not have a driver's license or access to a car. If public transportation is not available, and candidates are concerned about transportation, consider the following options:

- ▲ Arrange for car sharing with other employees.
- ▲ Consider arranging employer-sponsored transport for employees who need it.
- ▲ Provide support and/or incentives for obtaining a driver's license.
- ▲ For more best practices, check out Tent's resource on ***Addressing Transportation Barriers for Refugee Employees***

Having a car is essential in many places to get to work, particularly in locations that do not have extensive public transportation systems. Companies can help refugees address this!

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Call to action

How will you take what you've heard and learnt today, and become more active for a refugee hiring programme in the UK? What will you be accountable for?

Some ideas to get you started...

- ▲ Talk about this content with your HR or other colleagues and reflect on **how to implement** in your company.
- ▲ **Read** through the associated Tent guidance resources referenced.
- ▲ Review your **recruitment processes in relation to the barriers** refugees face in accessing work in your company.
- ▲ Discuss internally roles/ locations to start or further develop a **refugee hiring pilot** and reach out to Tent to further discuss.

Next steps

1

Take action to implement or share learnings from today within your company

2

TBC early Jan:
Tent UK public Coalition launch – first half 2024 (possibly w/c 4th March)

3

Follow up with Jen for any future topics & 1:1 calls for 2024 plans



TENT

Wishing you a **Wonderful
Holiday Season** and a
Happy New Year

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED
SUPPORT AND PARTNERSHIP

*From all of us at the
Tent Partnership for Refugees*

Additional Resources

All available on the [Members' Hub](#)

- Tent guidance, [UK Employers' Guide to Hiring Refugees](#), 2018. *Update coming in 2024
- Tent guidance, [Addressing Barriers: Language](#), 2022.
- Tent guidance, [Addressing Barriers: Transportation](#), 2023.
- Tent webinar, [UNIQLO \(hiring and training\)](#), 2022.
- Tent guidance, [Taking Part in Refugee Hiring Fairs](#), 2023.
- Tent guidance, [Guidance for European Companies on Hiring Refugees From Ukraine](#), 2023.
- Tent guidance, [Post-Hire: Implementing a Buddy Program for Refugee Employees](#), 2023.
- Deloitte Insights, [A New Home at Work: an Employer's Guide to Fostering Inclusion for Refugees in the Workplace](#), 2019.
- Deloitte Insights, [Post-Hire: Creating a Culturally Inclusive Workplace](#), 2019.

A barista with brown hair, wearing a black t-shirt and a dark green apron, is focused on pouring milk from a stainless steel pitcher into a bright green ceramic cup. She is standing behind a wooden coffee counter. To her right is a large, professional-grade espresso machine with multiple group heads. In the foreground, there are several stacks of clear glass cups and a black storage rack containing various coffee-making supplies like stir sticks and lids. The background shows a clean, modern coffee shop interior with shelves holding various items and a window looking out onto a street.

Thank you!