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# Professional bodies and supporting highly-skilled refugees into employment

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# Executive summary

Refugees may be highly qualified and experienced professionals, yet many remain unemployed or under employed, in a lower-grade occupation than their skills merit. This has consequences for these individuals, but also the UK economy where there are many areas of skills shortage. Mainstream employment and refugee support organisations lack the specialised knowledge to help these individuals, knowledge which is the basis of professional bodies and their members.

This project sought to produce a research-informed review of the policies and activities of professional bodies to support refugees into employment in their disciplines, to understand current issues, barriers, and provision, and to provide recommendations to assist professional bodies in developing their practice. Three approaches were taken:

- A scoping review of global literature on highly skilled migrants and professional bodies
- A review of websites and relevant activities of a sample of professional bodies in the UK to evaluate some of the support currently available
- Interviews and discussions with key informants, including professional body representatives and related organisations, refugee and employment support organisations, and refugees with a professional background themselves

The research shows that highly skilled migrants in general (which are not always refugees) face barriers in (re)entering their professions, including qualification recognition and skills assessment, limited access to appropriate language support and high quality information, advice and guidance (IAG), lack of host country work experience and knowledge of workplace norms, lack of professional networks and high quality mentoring, specialised job search assistance, CV and interview preparation, and volunteering or work placements.

The huge diversity of professional bodies in the UK presents, to an outsider, a confusing array of names, terminology, roles, powers, relationships, degrees of specialism, and geographical reach. While some may recognise refugees as potential client groups, few professional bodies acknowledge that there are those with the skills or capacity to work in their profession, and even fewer provide clear and accessible support for those wishing to do so. With a few exceptions, the literature is largely blind to the potential role of professional bodies other than as institutions accrediting qualifications where they are a regulator. They are not represented as having the capacity through their operations and members to be agents for change to address the consistently recurring support needs identified.

There is however evidence of willingness to understand the issues and support needs, with much goodwill which can be harnessed. While some successful initiatives have been short-lived due to funding, there are also some areas of more embedded and sustainable good practice, innovation, and partnerships in the health, IT and engineering sectors which could be used as models and developed. The research has therefore produced a series of practical recommendations, and an accompanying guide for professional bodies who wish to extend their support and inclusion.

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# Introduction

Early integration of refugees into the labour market is a key policy goal for all states to reduce welfare dependency and to contribute to the economy, as well as being important for individuals' well-being and livelihoods. How this is achieved varies considerably, as do levels of success. For example, in Germany, the government's key focus is the inclusion of migrants in the labour market, as participation is seen as a prerequisite to active participation in society, so there is access to technical vocational training and higher education. In contrast, such as in the UK and Australia for example, the labour market and education and training are not linked so well and funding is limited (Webb, Hodge, Holford, Milana, & Waller, 2016). A review of best practice across the EU (Konle-Seidl, 2016) notes the importance of:

- early offer of language tuition
- skills assessment
- quality counselling to develop an individualised integration plan
- recognition of foreign credentials
- skills and qualification upgrading
- job search assistance
- CV and interview preparation
- quality mentoring
- volunteering places
- work placements (including shadowing)

While undoubtedly true, the inadequacy of mainstream support, particularly to those refugees with professional backgrounds has been noted (All Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees, 2017; Cangiano, 2008; UNHCR, 2021). The qualifications they have prior to entry may not be recognized in the UK, or they may be unable to produce documentary evidence of them (Bloch, 2004). Re-entering their profession (if at all) can involve a long process (Morrice, 2009), and *“qualified professionals with managerial and administrative backgrounds are the most disadvantaged group in terms of routes to employment. They follow longer routes of postgraduate education, volunteering and so on, yet most are unable to find suitable employment”* (Shiferaw & Hagos, 2002, p. 9). The time taken means they often lose skills (Smyth & Kum, 2010).

Highly-skilled professionals have specific language needs (Hann, Willott, Graham-Brown, Roden, & Tremayne, 2021). They are likely to require a high score in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) to register with the relevant professional body, which may be difficult to find or afford (All Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees, 2017), and for example there is very little high level provision in Greater London and it is mostly delivered in the private sector (Stevenson, Kings, & Sterland, 2017). They may also be caught between the policy emphasis of quick entry to employment and learning English. While work is a route to integration and a positive economic outcome, lower end jobs are detrimental to refugees' language learning and risks being counter-productive for improved longer-term outcomes (Morrice, Tip, Collyer, & Brown, 2019).

Professionals perhaps face other challenges too. These individuals will have been in highly paid and high-status jobs, and failure to secure employment commensurate with their skills is associated with loss of self-esteem and downward professional mobility (Mesthenos & Ioannidi, 2002). As well as consequences for the economy and welfare dependency, this has significant impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals (and by extension, their families) as their profession forms a key part of their identity, status and social networks (Mackenzie Davey & Jones, 2019). These are people for whom *“... their profession or occupation tends to be the main axis of identity and abandoning it would thus involve not only a loss of income and status but also a loss of identity”* (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2003).

So how big a problem is this in the UK? According to recent [UNHCR](#) data, as of November 2022 there are just over 230,000 refugees in the UK. The characteristics of the people will vary depending on the nature of the conflict and country from which they are fleeing, and data on educational levels and occupations are not routinely collected, but many refugees may be highly qualified and experienced professionals, and have skills in areas where there are labour market shortages in the UK. How many fall into the category of ‘highly skilled’ is difficult to know, but Cangiano (2008) notes that labour force surveys show that migrants in general tend to be polarised in terms of qualifications relative to the UK-born population, so a larger proportion of the migrant workforce is found at the top and bottom of the ‘qualification ladder’ (p.8). Specifically for refugees, a number of projects and studies have provided estimates: Pile (1997) noted that many refugees were professionals in their own country; 23% of refugees aged 18 or over were qualified to degree level or above on arrival in the UK (Bloch, 2002), and in a survey of over 1,000 refugees, Kirk (2004, p. 15) described 15% as being in “professional occupations” before coming to the UK, and a further 22% as “managers and senior officials”. Over 18% of refugees on Teesside had degree level qualifications or higher, and nearly 20% had vocational, professional or sub-degree level qualifications (Chapman & Neil, 2004), and more recently, of arrivals from Ukraine, 75% of adults are qualified to degree level, and 15% had a vocational or job-specific qualification (Office for National Statistics, 2022).

Given this, professional bodies are key stakeholders as they (or their members) possess specialized skills and knowledge, understand and drive workplace culture and accessing employment, and may act as guardians and regulators of standards and entry to the profession through accreditation of qualifications or other membership requirements. The current literature across a range of professions and European countries indicates that there is a greater role for professional bodies to integrate and enhance employment prospects for refugees (Willott & Stevenson, 2013; Zacher, 2019) including outreach and support activities (Ng Chok, Mannix, Dickson, & Wilkes, 2018) and recognition of qualifications (Ní Mhurchú, 2007). This project sought to produce a research-informed review of the policies and activities of professional bodies to support refugees into employment in their disciplines, to understand current issues, barriers, and provision, and to provide recommendations to assist professional bodies in developing their practice.

# Professional bodies & professional regulation in the UK

A range of terminology is found in the literature, including “professional body”, “professional and regulatory body”, “professional association”, “professional institute”, “professional regulator”, “regulatory body” or “professional organisation”. In some cases the latter term may be used to denote organisations who mostly *employ* professionals such as hospitals and universities, or specialised law, finance and engineering companies (Gorman, 2015). In some cases and areas of enquiry, professional associations are treated a subset of the broader ‘member associations’ which are all associations with a membership and can include sports, residents, charitable and philanthropic organisations (Tschirhart & Gazley, 2014) whose members have a range of public and private motivations for participating (Hager, 2014). Professional associations fulfil a wide range of roles and themselves may have highly divergent views on their role and function because of the different orientations of members, so for example whether they are researchers or practitioners (Critchfield, 2011). For consistency, I will use the term “professional body” throughout unless the specific source or quote uses an alternative, or any distinction is implied.

A working definition is provided by the Professional Association Research Network (Box 1).

Box 1. Overview of the sector from the Professional Association Research Network [PARN](#)

*Professional bodies are dedicated to the advancement of the knowledge and practice of professions through developing, supporting, regulating and promoting professional standards for technical and ethical competence.*

*Professional bodies are concerned with the public benefit as well as the reputation of professionals. They aim to maintain and develop professionalism, thereby securing high quality professional services for society.*

*There are approximately 400 professional bodies in the UK. Together, they represent 13 million professionals.*

*Three different types of organisation make up the professional body sector:*

- *Professional associations*
- *Regulatory bodies*
- *Learned societies*

*Some occupations combine these functions into a single professional body, whilst in others they are clearly differentiated organisations.*

A key factor is whether they are a regulatory body, and accreditation is required through them for anyone wishing to work in the field. This is currently an area of policy development in the UK following its exit from the EU. The framework to recognise overseas professional qualifications in the UK mainly stems from the EU Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive 2005 (MRPQ Directive), and the Department of Business Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) is developing systems to replace it (UK Government, 2021). As part of this policy initiative, BEIS briefly outlines the nature of arrangements for regulation of professions (Box 2), which highlights the complexity and variety of professions, organisations, and processes.

Box 2. Outline of regulatory arrangements for professions in the UK [BEIS](#)

*Across the UK there are over 160 professions that are regulated by legislation, by more than 50 regulators, in addition to a range of other professions regulated voluntarily. These professions, such as nursing and teaching, provide a wide range of employment opportunities. A regulated profession is one in which there are restrictions to pursuing the activities or a subset of activities of the profession, such as for doctors, and/or restrictions for using a professional title, such as the use of 'architect'.*

*The most common example of a professional regulation is where an individual is required by law to register with a regulator in order to practise within that profession. This usually requires members to gain a qualification or carry out specialised training to demonstrate their capability in their chosen field. Regulation can also be done on a voluntary basis, for example where chartered professional bodies grant individuals the right to use a particular professional title, such as 'chartered accountant' in the UK.*

*Professions can benefit from distinct approaches to regulation, attuned to the needs of the profession and the territory covered by the relevant regulator. The regulation of some professions is underpinned by specific legislation, such as nursing. The regulation of some other professions is managed voluntarily, without underpinning legislation, such as professions that are regulated by some Chartered Bodies.*

*There are different arrangements in place in different parts of the UK for the regulation of certain professions, for example for solicitors, primary and secondary school teachers, and social workers. The distinctive approaches to the regulation of some professions in different parts of the UK reflect the differences in, for example, the justice and education systems.*

A few examples will illustrate this further: Some entities are associated with a single profession, such as the General Medical Council (GMC), which is the regulator for doctors, whose professional body is the British Medical Association (BMA). Others have regulatory roles across a number of professions, such as the Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) which regulates 15 professions protected by law, such as Dietician, Speech and Language Therapist and Paramedic, all of which have their own professional body. The Science Council provides overall quality assurance and sets standards for professional registration for scientists and technicians across a range of disciplines, with currently 36 members from fields as diverse as the British Psychological Society, the Royal College of Podiatry, and the British Society of Soil Science, some of whom individually may have a regulatory role, others not. Organisations' names may include "Institute", "Royal Institute", "Chartered Institute", "Association", "Society", "Royal Society", "Chartered Society", or "Council" among others. Searching by an outsider for what might seem like a single profession or area of work would yield multiple possible organisations, so for accountancy there could be the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales (ICAEW), Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland (ICAI), Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland (ICAS), Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) and Institute of Financial Accountants (IFA). Some organisations have their own process for training, assessing and accrediting skills, with varying degrees of flexibility (Lester, 2009). This may focus only on higher level skills and certification at the postgraduate level for those already in careers, while others may effectively outsource entry-level education to universities or other education providers, but may retain close control of the curriculum, quality and standards, often with the requirement that the staff are themselves professionally accredited (Harvey, Mason, & Ward, 1995).

It is important to acknowledge that professions are by definition exclusionary. Membership and practice indicate particular skills and standards, and this is vitally important for public confidence, particularly in



safety-critical fields. It would also be naïve to consider that membership has always been, or continues to be in many cases, equally open to all. Pierre Bourdieu observes that *“Those aspiring to or holding a position may have an interest in defining it in such a way that it cannot be occupied by anyone other than the possessors of properties identical to their own”* (Bourdieu & Nice, 2010, p. 147). In the review of Carr-Saunders & Wilson’s seminal book *The Professions* (1933), Rudlin (1934, p. 324) notes the absence of questions of social inequality in their analysis: *“No one can escape the conclusion that rules of entrance, methods of government, tests of competence, relationship to change, that these aspects of professionalism are and must be influenced by the fact that there are in society classes to which, for the most part, the door of the professions is closed”*. Classes as used here is a broad term, not simply social class, although this was and remains key, but we would explicitly include gender, ethnicity, disability, and other protected characteristics. In a recent review, Brock (2021, p. 580) summarised the approaches and theoretical traditions used to research professional associations: *“It is thus crucial to support future efforts not only to understand and counteract inequality in the professional organizations, but also to support diversity and inclusion in these settings”*.

The complexity briefly outlined here itself suggests that communication and clarity of role and purpose, and distinctions where applicable, are crucial if diversity and inclusion are to be achieved for refugees and others unfamiliar with the UK professions.

# Methodology

To produce a research-informed review of the policies and activities of professional bodies to support highly skilled refugees and other migrants into employment in their disciplines, three approaches were taken:

1. A scoping review of published literature
2. A review of websites and relevant activities of a sample of professional bodies
3. Interviews and discussions with key informants, including professional body representatives and related organisations, refugee and employment support organisations, and refugees with a professional background themselves

Research Ethics approval for these activities was gained through the Leeds Beckett University process.

## Scoping review of literature

Systematic reviews are a common practice in medicine and to a lesser extent the social sciences (see [Cochrane](#) and the [Campbell Collaboration](#) respectively). These are designed to rigorously weigh the evidence, often quantitative and statistical, when there are multiple studies on a subject of varying design and quality. There are strict inclusion/exclusion criteria based on reported information such as sample sizes, experimental design, and presence of controls. Our review was more exploratory in nature, searching for evidence of the engagement with professional associations in employment programmes, project reports and academic research. We therefore followed the less restrictive process of a scoping review (Munn et al., 2018) which are useful as a tool to ‘determine the scope or coverage of a body of literature on a given topic and give clear indication of the volume of literature and studies available as well as an overview (broad or detailed) of its focus’ (p. 2). This approach has been used in similar review studies such as refugee access to housing (Brown, Gill, & Halsall, 2022) and the suitability of ESOL provision (Hann et al., 2021).

For academic literature University-subscribed databases were searched (Scopus, Academic Search Complete and Business Source Premier) using the search string (“Professional association” OR “regulatory body” OR “professional bod\*”) AND (migrant OR refugee\*) AND employment) in the full text. Criteria are indicated in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Literature search criteria

Search string	(“Professional association” OR “regulatory body” OR “professional bod*”) AND (migrant OR refugee*) AND employment)
Inclusion criteria	All study designs, including qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods Studies focusing on international migration of highly-skilled or professionals, particularly refugees
Exclusion criteria	Studies focused on refugees and migrants as service users of professional services Studies focused only on planned skilled immigrant programmes entailing recruitment and processing in the home country Studies reporting internal migration, or on employment and labour markets in general Studies reporting on professionals outside the scope of this work (e.g. professional athletes or musicians) Non-English language papers

The initial search generated 1,005 unique hits, which were reduced to 10 when the criteria were applied. These articles were read, and relevant sources cited by them followed up. A search was also made for articles citing these sources using Scopus and Google Scholar. Further literature, including project reports, were gained from contacts with some key organisations working in refugee employment services (see Appendix 1). Much of the literature is describing and re-stating the problems. Given the objective of this project is to effect change rather than provide an exhaustive coverage of all that is written, the focus will be on work which illustrates a potential role for professional bodies, even if it does not state it, and the much more limited literature which actually engages with them.

## **Review of professional body websites**

While noting the range of organisation types and the scope of their regulation of entry to the profession, a key role they can play, whatever their nature, is providing clear information about joining that profession, and then support for those wishing to do so. In our context that includes information for ‘experts’ (the professionally qualified), but for whom English is not their first language, and they may not be familiar with the terminology and jargon used in a UK context. It is also potentially for ‘non-experts’ such as support workers and mentors who are working with refugee and asylum seeker clients and wish to tailor their advice.

We searched the websites of professional bodies for relevant information using the following criteria to determine their provision:

- 1) Information, advice and guidance for refugees/asylum seekers/TCNs, or those with overseas qualifications, seeking to work in the profession, including applying or registering with the organization
- 2) Ease of access to the above information. This is a somewhat subjective criterion, but it should be clear, easily found, and navigable. We noted this for any information found, and restricted the search to 5 minutes before giving up if nothing was apparent
- 3) Advice and links to other support or organizations that can assist refugees with the registration process, or which provide assistance and guidance for finding employment
- 4) Financial support such as discounts on registration or training fees for refugees/asylum seekers/TCNs
- 5) Evidence of refugees/asylum seekers/TCNs having gone through and registered with the organization (positive case studies)
- 6) Support for re-registering and/or converting qualifications gained in other countries
- 7) Support for English Language testing
- 8) Active outreach towards Refugee/Asylum seeker communities
- 9) Contact information for people within organization responsible for assisting refugees/asylum seekers/TCNs

The criteria are thus broadly around the availability of information, how comprehensive information and support is, and how accessible it is (both the information and support, and any associated costs or time constraints).

Organizations were selected with the aim of including a broad range of professions and type of role. Once located, the homepage was scrutinized for information, clicking on possible links if no clear one was available. The Equality & Diversity (or equivalent) section or Policy was located (if available), and information reviewed, including any statements or initiatives for refugees or others with overseas qualifications. If the website had a search function, then keywords such as “refugee”, “asylum” and “overseas” or “overseas qualifications” were used. Google or the <Ctrl+F> function was used alternatively. Information corresponding to the criteria above was noted for each organisation.

The review was mainly conducted between mid-December 2021 and March 2022. Some further reviews were conducted later in 2022 if a refugee interview participant (see below) was from a profession not covered in the original review. This allowed us to understand what was (or was not) potentially available to that person.

Analysis of these data will be conducted alongside information from the UK Government Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) The Recognition of Professional Qualifications and Regulation of Professions: Call for Evidence (available [here](#)). This was in response to significant skills shortages following Brexit, and the need for an overarching regulatory framework outside the previous EU system and which applied globally. The call for evidence ran from 25 August 2020 until 23 October 2020 and a range of organisations submitted information.

BEIS were unable to provide further details of the responses by individuals and organisations for confidentiality and data protection reasons, so our analysis is restricted to the broader points made in the published summary of responses.

## **Interviews and informant discussions**

A range of refugee support organisations and service providers, including ESOL providers, were contacted to outline the project and its aims, and to request that they participate themselves or if they could refer any willing service users. Professional bodies and policy organisations were contacted via email or messaging links on their websites.

Participants were sent Information Sheets and Consent Forms. Where these were refugees being recruited via organisations they were associated with (such as refugee support organisations and ESOL providers) the organisations were sent Information for Gatekeepers to ensure that all were clear of their role and boundaries. Materials can be seen in Appendix 2. Interviews were conducted via MS Teams and recorded with permission. Other informants who did not wish to be formally interviewed were spoken to via MS Teams or telephone, with notes taken.

# Results

## Scoping review of literature

The initial search and follow up generated a range of publication types, including Government reports and consultations, project and organisational reports, books, and formal academic journal articles. The latter were distributed across a range of disciplines, including management, human resource management, careers, politics, sociology and social policy, migration studies, and a range of more profession-specific journals such as those for nursing or social work etc.

Many papers report on skilled migrants in general, some of which skilled migrant programmes where applicants need to evidence qualifications in an area of skills shortages to apply for a visa, some explicitly refer to refugees as a distinct group, and some draw no distinction. While acknowledging that refugees may experience further sets of challenges linked to possible trauma and subsequent mental health issues, socioeconomic status, and restrictions on work, there are also similarities, so wider 'skilled migrant' works have been included where they offer insight. Clearly published literature will report on the situation and practices at or before the time of publication. New policies and initiatives can be implemented, so the situation in particular countries or professions may not currently be the same as reported in older work. This appears to have happened in some cases, although overall the impression is that there are consistent themes running through the literature of recent years.

### *Identity: refugee or professional?*

There are many programmes to support refugees, but the idea of a 'refugee' identity can itself be problematical. Tomlinson and Egan (2002) studied organizations providing employment-related services to refugees in the UK, where the emphasis can be on 'empowerment', helping refugees to become active subjects with the involvement of refugee community organizations. However in a hostile environment, the association with a refugee 'community' may itself reinforce outsider status. Similarly in Switzerland *"Refugees who have acquired high-level qualifications and/or who had a professional life before migration try (re)making their career trajectory on the move while being confronted with the structural limitations relating to the "refugee" category. Subsequent social categorization marking the "refugee" as "unskilled", "vulnerable" or incomplete" ..., as well as "a threat to the economic, social, and security welfare of the host countries" ... can create further constraints for these migrants"* (Cangià, Davoine, & Tashtish, 2021, p. 59).

For professionals, the profession is often a key part of their identity. Becoming a professional in any country is usually a long, and frequently costly, process, and one for which the individual and often families will have invested significant time and resources. Professions can be highly paid and high-status jobs. When skilled migrants move from their family, community and cultural roots the profession can be the main anchor of identity (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2003; Colic-Peisker, 2010). For refugees the frequently long process of asylum and then the barriers to entering the profession cause significant distress and disillusionment (Willott & Stevenson, 2013). The failure to secure employment commensurate with their skills and loss of professional status is associated with loss of self-esteem and downward professional mobility (Mesthenos & Ioannidi, 2002), loss of confidence (Archer, Hollingworth, Maylor, Sheibani, & Kowarzik, 2005) and a perception of diminished social status in the eyes of their community and family (Bauder, 2003). However professional identities are a function of the institutions and organisations of a country, and (re)constructing a new professional identity for migrants can present challenges. This may vary among professions, so for example Zikic and Richardson (2016) observed how Identity and growth were important but varied among professions, with doctors being more attached to their identity than IT professionals. As key drivers of the

professional identity, this suggests a clear role for professional bodies in supporting and enabling refugees to become the professional in their new country.

## ***Barriers to employment***

This section will review the barriers faced by highly skilled refugees in particular, but will also include wider literature on highly skilled migrants where a role for a professional body is evident. There are a range of intertwined issues, but some particular themes emerge; that there are particular issues affecting women, the importance of networks, and most commonly, the recognition of qualifications so these will be treated separately.

Refugees in general face many structural barriers when entering the labour market (Bloch, 2000), and a number of authors have looked at the way refugees cope with under or unemployment, have characterised strategies they adopt to cope, and how this changes over time (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2003; Piętko-Nykaza, 2015; Willott & Stevenson, 2013). There have been a huge range of projects and initiatives to improve integration. These programmes in high-income countries have recently been reviewed and evaluated (Ruiz & Vargas-Silva, 2021). The authors adopt a rigorous approach, including only those which, in their eyes, meet clear evaluation criteria and use quantitative analyses to clearly demonstrate “what works”. As well as noting the need for more formal evaluations of programmes, key insights included improved outcomes where there was: Reduced waiting times for a decision; strategic dispersal and placement of refugees to appropriate areas; bespoke job search assistance; and language training. This study, and the projects included, did not distinguish highly skilled and professional refugees who as noted earlier have particular needs and barriers, although as “bespoke job search assistance” demonstrably works in general, it is not stretching credulity to imagine it working for professionals. These ideas were picked up in the UNHCR assessment of resettled refugees and employment in the UK, where it was observed that none of the participants they interviewed were working in their previous field, many were “*waiting many months or even years to understand realistic career options, including whether they can utilize their previous degrees, qualifications and experience. Few participants had received specialized in-person advice about whether or how they could use their previous degrees or qualifications. It was important to many participants to receive in person advice from someone they trusted especially when making fraught decisions about whether to try and regain their previous profession or change careers*” (UNHCR, 2021, pp. 28-29).

Early work in Australia on the medical and engineering professions (Hawthorne, 1997) highlighted two types of discrimination. For engineers there were examples of overtly racist employer attitudes and “*it was rare for NESB engineers to report being valued for bilingual/bicultural skills, or for international experience – despite the increasing number of Australian engineering firms targeting offshore contracts*” (p.408). The other was hostility from the professional body, where in the 1990s the Australian Medical Council justified its imposition of a quota because overseas trained doctors were denying Australians the opportunity to become medical practitioners. Protectionism and active exclusion were also reported in Canada by Bauder who interviewed NGOs, immigrant-service agencies and employers in Greater Vancouver and suggested “*that professional associations and the state actively exclude immigrant labour from the most highly desired occupations in order to reserve these occupations for Canadian-born and Canadian-educated workers*” (Bauder, 2003, p. 699). Interviewing migrant social workers in Canada, there was “*a perception that employers do not invite them for job interviews due to issues of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination*” (Fulton, Pullen-Sansfaçon, Brown, Éthier, & Graham, 2016, p. 77), with one respondent saying “*The man [who interviewed me] said that [my resume] is excellent and the only thing I needed was to understand a little bit more about how the system works...*”. Knowledge of institutional norms, work requirements and workplace culture (van Riemsdijk & Axelsson, 2021), the importance of high quality job-search and re-employment processes are important if refugees are not to miss opportunities or waste time in rebuilding their careers,

which can often render their skills obsolete (Wehrle, Kira, & Klehe, 2019). Working with Syrian refugees in Switzerland, *“Better access to information concerning possible pathways and opportunities would be a good way to support refugees who want to continue their career trajectories, study or change profession”* (Cangià et al., 2021, p. 64). Understanding “how the system works” and other sector-specific employment support suggests a clear role for professional bodies, but they are frequently excluded from the analysis.

Barriers are clearly recognised in some literature from particular disciplines or functions, with an inevitable focus on their specific role in addressing them. In career counselling, Zacher reviews how careers advisors could better support refugees into employment, and contribute to their career development by helping them integrate their past professional experiences and future vocational aspirations with current task and challenges in the host countries (Zacher, 2019, p. 32). Similarly in Canada counsellors are urged to recognise that “new and professional” immigrants experience cross-cultural barriers, and need to develop self-efficacy to cope with discrimination, and they need information on interview techniques, dress code and so on (Kennedy & Chen, 2012). Improving career counselling practices was also a recommendation in the German context (Wehrle et al., 2019), although there was no recognition of a role for professional bodies. In a global review of skilled migrants’ employment, language competency and qualification recognition were important, those with networks including professionals (not just families, fellow-migrant and co-ethnics) were more likely to achieve qualification-matched employment, and heavily-regulated professions with rigid licensing procedures produced more occupational downgrading than those with more flexible systems (Shirmohammadi, Beigi, & Stewart, 2019). The authors responses then described how human resource professionals (in companies) needed to redirect their efforts in the light of this information, a reflection of their disciplinary focus and with no wider consideration of how professional bodies could play a complementary role.

Those recognising the barriers to integration faced by skilled migrants can note or advocate a wide range of agencies to provide solutions, although again they do not always explicitly include professional bodies. In the petroleum industry in Norway, there is no central government programme, so ‘employers, municipal governments, immigrant organizations, and labour unions’ all play a part (van Riemsdijk, Basford, & Burnham, 2016). In Canada, Ogbuagu (2012) calls for policy to include *“Bridge, Internships, Mentoring and National standards initiatives”* (p.8), but then says these *“have to be standardized, uniformized, legislated and mandated by the governments at the federal, provincial and Territorial levels.”* (p.9). So the emphasis is on government to mandate change, although he does go on to argue that multilateral initiatives are required, designed by governments, immigrant services providers and professional regulators.

## **Gender**

While all migrants may suffer to a lesser or greater extent an ethnic penalty due to discrimination or inter-cultural or linguistic barriers, it is important to recognise that the migration experience may also be gendered, and a growing number of scholars argue that a gendered analysis is essential (e.g. see Donato, Gabaccia, Holdaway, Manalansan IV, & Pessar, 2006; Meares, 2010). In her review, Webb (2015b) noted that the limited number of studies focusing on skilled migrant women tended to report negative consequences of migration, with downward occupational mobility and a reversion to traditional roles of family and childcare. This is not to suggest they are always victims, as some narratives of migrant Indian women in New Zealand show they have agency, negotiate their new workplace and culture, and challenge stereotypes (Pio & Essers, 2014). Some work does focus on the role of professional orientation programmes, or at least their findings suggest a role for professional bodies, even if these were not explicit in the papers. An evaluation of a four-week intensive professional transition program for skilled migrants in Australia showed evidence of downward occupational mobility among the participants, with women more likely to be employed in non-professional roles, including administration, customer service, retail and hospitality (O'Dwyer & Colic-Peisker, 2016).

Some of the barriers may not be employers themselves, but those working as labour market intermediaries, such as recruitment firms and employment agencies. Specifically working on highly skilled migrant women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields in Europe (Greece, Hungary, Italy, Sweden, and UK), authors noted that the employability of these women was perceived to be low by those intermediaries and so there was a clear need for training for them (Ricci, Crivellaro, & Bolzani, 2021).

### *Networks*

Webb (2015a) interviewing skilled migrants in Australia found that 'It's who you know, not what you know', as personal contacts and networks enabled skilled migrants and their spouses to secure appropriate level employment. She concluded that a 'regime of skills' was used by employers, agencies and educational institutions and the 'right' *social* [my emphasis] networks were needed. Similarly, in reporting 'success stories' of highly skilled refugees in the UK, respondents reported the importance of personal motivation and resilience, but also of building new social networks to support integration into the profession (Ganassin & Young, 2020). While social networks are indeed important for a variety of reasons, both personal and professional, I would argue that professional networks also need to be developed, particularly in areas of specialised employment where practices and culture are key, and a professional body (and its members) will be able to provide expert and tailored support.

Authors do acknowledge the importance of (re)building personal and professional networks (Johnstone Young, Ganassin, Schneider, Schartner, & Walsh, 2022), and interviewing people working for organisations supporting refugees into employment, it is understood that *"Lack of UK work experience, and, specifically, paid work experience were also seen as barriers, as were a lack of networks, specifically, professional networks"* (Tweed & Stacey, 2018, p. 20). The latter work called for the increased professionalisation of the sector (i.e. those providing employment support to refugees) to improve advice and guidance, but did not then advocate stronger engagement with professional bodies who can assist with specialised knowledge, work experience and networking as well as other benefits such as coaching and mentoring.

### *Qualifications*

Explicit inclusion in the literature of the role of professional bodies is most evident when they have a regulatory role, particularly in recognising and accrediting overseas qualifications as a requirement to practice. Sommer (2021) argues that not recognizing foreign qualifications is a political decision. The systems in Germany are driven by liberal forces requiring simple and speedy processes, particularly in areas of labour shortages, and the portability of qualifications across the EU. This arbitrary and othering of the skills of refugees from some countries and professions is deeply problematic. Similarly for Guo (2009) in Canada, the devaluation and denigration of previous qualifications and experience through lack of recognition of credentials is a political choice underpinned by the notion of deficiency and inferiority of qualifications from Third World countries. Even if not designed to be exclusionary, assessment processes for Australian social workers are based on an understanding of social work that risks excluding migrant social workers who have different models of practice than those on which the assessment process is based (Papadopoulos, 2016). Similar research in Canada has shown that engineering regulatory bodies attempt to reproduce the social and cultural integrity of the professional by requiring applicants to internalize cultural norms specific to the profession as it is practiced in Canada. In this way licensing procedures contribute to the cultural exclusion of immigrant practitioners (Girard & Bauder, 2007).

The frustration of those who are qualified but are unable to practice is understandable, with one of Alice Bloch's respondents saying that *"Most professional people like doctors, teachers and lawyers are not in a position to get into their profession straight away. They have to waste time getting British qualifications"*



(Bloch, 2000, p. 81). The sentiment is repeated elsewhere (All Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees, 2017). The notion of it necessarily being a 'waste of time' though is perhaps unrealistic in most cases as there may be very different educational, health and legal systems elsewhere, as well as workplace culture and professional standards. There is also variation among professions. For highly educated refugees in Norway, Sweden and Germany, validating foreign qualifications was the main challenge, often with lengthy processes. There was a big division between occupations regulated by law (such as doctors and teachers) and non-regulated ones (such as IT engineers). In non-regulated occupations, the process is often simple, but many legally regulated occupations require national licences to practice. There have been state-level initiatives to address some of these concerns in priority areas, so the Swedish Public Employment Service, commissioned by the Swedish government and working with employers, established fast-track programmes, and in Norway a process was developed to accredit people lacking their teaching certificates via a skills testing and interview process (Mozetič, 2018).

Flexible systems for recognizing foreign qualifications are highly attractive to individuals, employers, and governments, so regulators have been under pressure to modify their approach when seen as a barrier (Hawthorne, 2013), and in Australia there have been some initiatives to 'partially' certify professionals so they can work in some capacity before eventual full recognition. While appealing, Hawthorne also sounds a note of caution as there can be threats. New processes may increase complexity, migrants may be stranded in their conditional status and suffer lack of career progression and lower wages, and there is also a public risk of someone practicing if they haven't met a country's standards. Nevertheless there have been some successes for reformed accreditation pathways and English language skills registration (Hawthorne, 2015).

There is a literature which explicitly calls for professional regulatory bodies to clarify their processes. Canadian refugees face down skilling and difficulties accessing the labour market due to lack of recognition of qualifications and previous experience, lack of English language, discrimination by employers, and the Catch-22 of lack of Canadian references or work experience or employer references, so that *"Professional organizations should have as part of their mandate a responsibility to assist refugees and immigrants in re-entering their professions.* (Krahn, Derwing, Mulder, & Wilkinson, 2000, p. 82). The authors restrict the role of professional bodies to credential recognition rather than highlighting other possible roles in tackling these barriers, and this is seen elsewhere. So for example *"clearer guidance throughout the credential recognition process for migrant social workers would be beneficial. With increased organization and collaboration among the various governmental and regulatory bodies involved in facilitating the professional migration process, Canadian society as a whole will readily benefit from the knowledge and skills of migrant social workers"* (Fulton et al., 2016, p. 81). There is a danger that these credentialing problems create the perception of discrimination, but some migrant professionals are fully aware of the need for it, but the process is the problem: *"professional accreditation bodies should modify their existing policies to incorporate new procedures designed to integrate skilled immigrants into the Canadian labour market. This is because the respondents in our study were not distressed because Canadian employers did not accept their credentials immediately and without serious and prolonged scrutiny; rather, they were distressed because they did not know the path to take to overcome the credentialing problems that they faced"* (Grant & Nadin, 2007, p. 159). The authors argue that government agencies and professional accreditation bodies should prioritise new policy initiatives to provide clear paths for migrants, although they do not specify what exactly they could or should do. The complexities and inconsistencies in recognising and accrediting different professional qualifications has been noted in Ireland, where *"there has been little or no opportunity for cross-collaboration between professional bodies to facilitate the sharing of good, innovative practices"* (Ní Mhurchú, 2007, p. 10) and where a national strategy for integration is required. Other authors do note the inadequacy of mainstream support, particularly to those refugees with professional backgrounds, where it is evident that employment support is a necessary adjunct to recognition of qualifications (Cangiano, 2008, p. 33).

## *Wider engagement with professional bodies*

Relatively few studies explicitly focus on the actual or potential role of professional bodies beyond that of recognising and accrediting qualifications. This is true in the conceptual literature as well as practice-based. Lee and colleagues undertook a multidisciplinary review of refugee employment and workforce integration, coining the term *canvas ceiling* for the systemic and multi-level barriers they face (Lee, Szkudlarek, Nguyen, & Nardon, 2020). They categorised the factors influencing integration as: Institutional-level (immigration regulations; *qualification accreditation and education*; socio-political climate), Organisational-level (employers; self-employment; *support organisations*), and Individual-level (individual demographics; language; *social networks*; psychological responses; motivation) (my emphases). Professional and regulatory bodies are treated solely as institutional factors (via their role in accreditation). They are absent from consideration as support organisations, yet their (and their members) knowledge of workplace culture and practices, job-seeking skills and technical language, and ability to provide mentoring and potentially access to work experience is hugely important. Likewise their access to professional networks, rather than just social networks, important though these are and acknowledging that they may not be entirely separate.

Of the literature which does discuss these wider roles, some of these worked across a range of professions (or they were not specified), but most are in the health profession, particularly doctors, and these will be treated separately.

A more comprehensive recognition of the potential role of professional bodies was evident in the work of Louise Archer and colleagues in London nearly 20 years ago (Archer et al., 2005). Qualifications remained a key issue as many felt there was a lack of transparency amongst professional bodies and universities about how they were assessed, and a more coherent approach would help. Although nurses had been supported *"a range of other professional bodies 'could be doing an awful lot more for this untapped work force than they are doing already'"* (p.51). Difficulties presented by the complexity outlined previously in the section introducing the range and variety of professional bodies was clear, as there were negative impacts on refugees in fields with competing professional and awarding bodies. This suggests a clear role for these organisations in clearly communicating their scope and remit, both for refugees and those assisting them in employment programmes. There were positive outcomes though where refugee support agencies were able to provide tailored job search courses, building or creating relationships and partnerships with professional bodies, and linking different services and forms of support. A key recommendation therefore (p.89) was that *"Where tailored provision is only available for certain professions, consideration might be given to how the range of services might be expanded (e.g. through partnership with other providers, employers and professional/ statutory bodies)"*.

In reviewing the experience of skilled migrants in Australia (including those recruited overseas, as well as refugees), it was evident that the recognition processes conducted by professional bodies did not just review qualifications, but also required professional knowledge, systems knowledge and an understanding of the professional landscape (Wagner & Childs, 2006). Lack of this specialised knowledge resulted in exclusion, and the authors called for a range of interventions, including: *"(i) a comprehensive skills assessment process, including the development of a contextualized portfolio of skills, experience and qualifications based on recognition rather than an assumption of deficit or disapproval, (ii) access to professional networks and peer groups linking them into the labour market and/or higher education, and (iii) generic and specific professional development programs, addressing conventions and standards of professional practice in Australia"* (p.60).

More recent work in the UK, as well as noting a role for professional bodies in qualification recognition, demonstrates how refugee support organisations need further specialised information on skills requirements and jobs, and the desirability of 'professional buddying', although it does not specifically call for professional bodies to proactively do anything about it (Learning and Work Institute, 2019).

### *Health professionals*

Doctors and other health professionals have long been a target for recruitment in high income countries, although paradoxically there still remain barriers even for these actively-pursued individuals. In Canada there have been a number of recertification and bridging programmes in the profession, although they are often short term and funding dependent, and lack evaluation of their effectiveness (Covell, Neiterman, & Bourgeault, 2016), and there is rarely a focus on the specific issues and needs of refugees (Leblanc, Bourgeault, & Neiterman, 2013). There have been programmes to orient refugee health professionals in Germany, including technical language courses, cross-cultural coaching, and work shadowing. Outcomes were broadly positive although there were challenges in finding appropriate work shadowing, and a lack of recognition of the diverse backgrounds of refugees and anxieties they may have about (re)joining the professions (Khan-Gökkaya & Mösko, 2020).

The situation is replicated in the UK. Interviews with overseas-qualified doctors recruited to work in the UK and their education supervisors revealed a range of practical difficulties including gaps in specific UK knowledge, working in the NHS, and professional work relations and clinical care (Rothwell, Morrow, Burford, & Illing, 2013). Support needs were identified before coming to the UK, once they start work and then on-going support when they are in post which requires coordinated action among government, regulator, and employer. As well as targeted recruitment, the presence of a large number of refugee doctors in the UK has long been recognised, as has their value to the National Health Service (NHS). A relatively small investment is required to support them into UK practice compared to the cost and time required to train a new doctor, although they do face the common hurdles of recognition of qualifications, training, and employment regulations. A wide range of national and local policy initiatives have been implemented to support their inclusion (Stewart, 2007).

A longer-standing scheme is the [Building Bridges](#) programme in London, a multi-agency partnership (including language class provider, university, NHS and the Refugee Council) which between 2009 and 2018 supported refugee doctors, pharmacists, dentists, biomedical scientists, physiotherapists and nurses to work in the NHS (Butt et al., 2019). This comprises a core curriculum of:

1. Orientation to the National Health Service
2. Preparing targeted CVs for jobs in healthcare
3. Identifying strengths and weaknesses
4. The value of volunteering
5. Understanding UK work culture
6. Writing a job application
7. Succeeding at a job interview
8. Creating a clinical attachment portfolio

There is also support for language learning and testing, as well as clinical attachments and ongoing pastoral support when in post. Results are positive (and information is also disseminated via a YouTube [video](#)), although the authors note a lack of control group to compare outcomes, and suggest such multi-agency work should be applied in other settings. The project is ongoing and to 2022 had supported 788 individuals. Other schemes include Welcome to UK Practice (WtUKP), a free half-day workshop offered to doctors qualified overseas to help them understand the ethical and professional standards expected in the UK (Kehoe, Rothwell, Hesselgreaves, Carter, & Illing, 2019). Evaluation of the schemes suggests it is valued, including the opportunity to meet other in the same position and share experiences, as well as knowledge gained. There were limitations though, and there was a clear need for longer and more follow-up sessions in a more structured programme.

There are examples of support provided by professionals and other agencies without explicit engagement with a professional body. Reviewing workforce integration across the EU Martín and colleagues describe an organisation in France designed to support refugee health professionals (Martín et al., 2016, p. 61):

*The Association for the reception of refugee doctors and medical attendants (APRS, Association d'accueil aux medecins et personnels de santé réfugiés en France) was created in the 1970s, in the aftermath of the coup d'Etat in Chile, with the aim of assisting refugee health professionals. There was, particularly, interest given the difficulties that they face in practising in France without a French diploma. PRS is based in the Parisian Sainte Anne hospital and is run by medical practitioners. Today it has one employed administrative staff member and five volunteers. APRS offers personalised support in person, by phone or by mail, making giving an insider's knowledge of the professional sector. Counsellors provide information on laws and administrative procedures; help recipients to develop a viable professional project in France (for example, they often advise nurses who are not ready to invest several years in a French diploma to opt for a much shorter training course that entitles them to practice as nurse auxiliary); and they provide support with administrative procedures (preparing applications). Moreover, thanks to their contacts, counsellors can assist in finding training and internships opportunities.*

It is evident that the kind of recognised support needs and what is provided closely matches the initiatives in the UK. There are also some associated schemes for health workers to complement the professional support they may receive, recognising the broader issues of true integration. For example the Neighbours for Newcomers programme welcome refugee nurses joining the NHS Neighbours for Newcomers. [Reset Communities and Refugees](#) operates in a number of towns and works with the local NHS Trust hospital and neighbourhood volunteers to welcome nurses and help them settle into their new life here.

Finally, there are highly skilled migrants for whom returning to the same profession presents too many barriers, or who wish to change profession. They do possess valuable skills, so their unemployment or underemployment is an economic loss to the state as well as personally. Support and advice on alternative career pathways for health professionals in Canada was shown to be limited and requires a more systemic and comprehensive programme so that this talent is not wasted (Turin et al., 2021). This kind of advice on alternative careers individuals might pursue while utilising their skills would be useful across the range of professions.

## ***Working in the profession***

While a comprehensive treatment of the subject is beyond the scope of this review, it is relevant to note that some work has explored the experiences of migrant professionals once in their professions. These are often reporting the results of skilled migrant programmes, rather than support for refugees (or the distinction is not made), but some of the analysis and observations do suggest a role for professional bodies which would be relevant for those yet to enter a profession too.

The same profession may have different disciplinary roots in different countries, so for example “*In some systems social work is predominantly informed by the social sciences, while in others it may be more informed by clinical psychology and health sciences*” (Beddoe, Fouche, Bartley, & Harington, 2012), and these authors go on to note that

*... orientation to social work in a new country requires more than the provision of information about legal frameworks and policies. Migrant professionals encounter workplace and professional cultures that may differ markedly from their previous country. Differences exist in many elements of social work: relationships with key stakeholders; the public standing of social*

*work; the education and regulation of the profession; supervision and professional development; and, lastly, opportunities for career advancement. (p.1014-1015)*

The same authors argue that for migrant social workers employed in New Zealand, integrated partnership working is key: “*Collectively, the professional community of social workers, social work managers, educators and professional bodies must articulate a coherent local professional discourse.*” (Fouché, Beddoe, Bartley, & de Haan, 2014, p. 2021). These examples illustrate how professionals from different countries need to understand their new working culture. The analytical lens of Hofstede uses ideas of cultural differences to understand how groups of people share norms in how they think, feel and act, and how these norms can potentially be barriers to understanding among different groups (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). In brief, key components are *Power distance* (whether power is distributed equally, and how hierarchical a group is); *Individualism* (the balance between individual and collective behaviours and strength of group cohesion); *Masculinity* (a spectrum from assertive and competitive to modest and supportive); and *Uncertainty-avoidance* (how people cope with ambiguity, change and alternative perspectives). These ideas have been applied to understand how overseas medical graduates face a number of challenges in adapting to the workplace in the UK (Morrow, Rothwell, Burford, & Illing, 2013). The need to extend support to doctors while they are in practice was also a key recommendation of the evaluation of the GMC Welcome to UK Practice Initiative described previously (Kehoe et al., 2019) and there were similar conclusions for programmes in Germany (Khan-Gökkaya & Mösko, 2020). Other authors have reported that as well as an ‘ethnic penalty’ faced by overseas-qualified doctors in the UK, there is also a strong gendered dimension and intersectionality to the workplace experience (Oikelome & Healy, 2013).

So there can be a clear role for professional bodies in helping understand the culture and politics of working in that profession in the UK, both before entering it, and continuing in the workplace for true inclusion.

## Review of professional body websites

The websites of 42 organisations were surveyed, across a broad range of disciplines and regulatory roles, which included 16 who had responded to the BEIS Call for Evidence (see Appendix 2).

Table 1 shows those organisations who were judged to have met at least one of the criteria, a total of nine of the 42 surveyed. Of these, only the General Medical Council ([GMC](#)) had the full range of support we consider ideal. Others met a number of the criteria, mostly in the health sector, where, as for doctors, there are acute skills shortages and a long tradition of the recruitment of overseas professionals, so the support needs are more recognised and embedded. The evidence therefore suggests that there is little recognition of the issue, or any meaningful support provided.

**Table 1.** Professional associations which met at least one of the criteria outlined in the search. (Numbers correspond to the numbered list in the methods section).

<u>Sector and organization</u>	<u>Criteria Met</u>
General Medical Council	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9
General Pharmaceutical Council	4, 6
Nursing and Midwifery Council	5, 6
Chartered Society of Physiotherapists	1,2,3,8
Health and Care Professionals Council	1,2,3,4,9
Teaching Regulation Agency	1,2,4,5
Association of Chartered Certified Accountants	5
Institution of Engineering and Technology	5
Institute of Physics	8

Some included case studies of individuals who had gone through and registered with the organization (criterion 5), although precisely how they had achieved this and what the professional association had done to facilitate it was not clear. Others discussed how members/practitioners may be working with refugees as a client group, but not how they themselves could practice, thereby (albeit unwittingly) contributing to the ‘deficit’ approach to refugees, considering them only as victims requiring support rather than people with agency, and in our case, highly qualified. Active outreach was only evident in three cases.

Where details were available, we contacted the organisation using the link provided which was either an email address or a text box to submit a question. Some responded and answered the request, or agreed to take part in interviews (see next section), but in other cases the contact links did not work (either not recognised, or it generated an error message), or there was no reply. This certainly isn’t a feature unique to professional associations, as websites are dynamic, and people and projects change, but it is evident how this could be a significant setback to refugees who thought they were making progress in engaging with their profession.

It is instructive to triangulate these findings with the responses provided by regulatory bodies to the call from BEIS, so below we include verbatim some relevant details from The Recognition of Professional Qualifications and Regulation of Professions: Call for Evidence Summary of Responses, p11-13:

*We asked about the types of costs to regulators of assessing qualifications from both overseas and domestic applicants. 24 regulatory bodies provided information on types of costs. The key reasons for costs included:*

- *Administrative checks – associated with verifying qualifications awarded by overseas bodies, or disclosure checks to ensure applicants are permitted to practise within a profession;*
- *Language test – ensuring that overseas applicants have the necessary English language skills to provide services across the UK. An example given was the Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board (PLAB) test, which is required by the General Medical Council in order for overseas applicants to practise in the UK; and*
- *Further compensatory measures – where there remains some qualification aspect, or competence examination that relates neither to original qualifications nor language testing. 24 respondents provided detail on precise costs, with a range from £0 to £3,980. Out of these respondents, 9 reported total costs of over £1,000.*

#### *Supporting refugees*

*We asked to what extent regulators have provisions in place to support the recognition of professional qualifications held by refugees. Of the 63 regulatory bodies which responded to this question, 7 specified that they have tailored measures in place to support refugees.*

- *Where described, the measures that regulatory bodies employ to support applications for professional qualification recognition from refugees included:*
  - *Working with refugee charities to identify routes into the relevant profession;*
  - *Providing financial support or waivers of application and examination fees; and*
  - *Flexibility when assessing the supporting materials that are needed to make a recognition application by refugees who may be unable to produce the necessary documents.*
- *Of the 63 respondents, 56 said that they did not have dedicated provisions to support applications from refugees.*

*Where detail was provided, these respondents suggested that this was either because supporting those applications would be captured in their current recognition processes, or that their processes were flexible enough to accommodate for the need of these applicants on a case-by-case basis, when necessary.*

We do not know which regulatory bodies submitted this evidence, so precise cross-referencing is not possible, but we can make some general observations. Firstly, while it seems that some have zero cost (or at least, one does), costs for recognition of qualifications can be very high – hundreds or thousands of pounds. This could be a significant barrier to refugees without any waivers given their typical status of under- or unemployment and relative poverty. Secondly, while 7 of the 63 respondents said they did have tailored support measures for refugees in place, we (mostly) could not find any evidence of it. There may be a sampling issue here, in that we happened not to survey the websites of those who did provide this support, but interviews with representatives and members of some of these organisations (see next section) suggests this is unlikely in all cases. They acknowledged that while extensive support could be (and in some cases was) given to those who managed to penetrate the system (usually via a personal referral), there wasn't any outreach or clear signposting to how others could achieve it. The response of other 56 who did not have dedicated provision *"either because supporting those applications would be captured in their current recognition processes, or that their processes were flexible enough to accommodate for the need of these*

*applicants on a case-by-case basis, when necessary”* is not convincing. It was not clear that there were any recognition processes, flexible or otherwise, and even if they were, without any effort at outreach or clear and accessible guidance to those hoping to engage with them they have little value. It is also worth remembering that the BEIS call for evidence and policy focus is solely on the recognition of qualifications. The report contains some responses from individuals, many of whom reported that they did understand how to obtain information and enter the profession, but *“those who reported difficulty pointed to further opportunities to reduce barriers to entry into professions. These included opportunities to talk to professionals about their experiences, by clarifying the exact steps required by different routes into a given profession, and through greater publicity about certain professions”* (p.17). This highlights how professional bodies need to move beyond just narrow qualification recognition, essential though this is, and have a clear role in outreach, information sharing, networking, and mentoring/buddying schemes.



## Interviews and informant discussions

A total of 33 people contributed to the research, including 19 interviews which were recorded and transcribed, and 14 informants who were happy to discuss the ideas and issues as individuals or organisations but did not wish to be formally interviewed (see Table 1). Notes were taken for these discussions.

Table 1. Contributors to the project. Type indicates whether they were an individual Refugee; a Refugee Support Organisation (RSO, which may be generic or specialised in employment); a Professional Body representative (PB, which may be a person formally working for the organisation, or a university lecturer in that regulated profession); or Policy (those working in general employment and professional policy areas).

Type	Gender	Profession	Country of origin	Contribution
Refugee	F	Psychology/Counselling	Iran	Interview
Refugee	F	Psychology/Counselling	Iran	Interview
Refugee	F	Accounting	El Salvador	Interview
Refugee	M	Civil Engineer/Construction	Kurdistan	Interview
Refugee	M	Law	DR Congo	Interview
Refugee	M	IT	Afghanistan	Interview
Refugee	F	Civil Engineer	Ukraine	Interview
Refugee	M	Doctor	Syria	Interview
Refugee	F	Teacher	Pakistan	Interview
Refugee	M	Water engineer	Africa	Interview
Refugee + RSO	F		Bosnia	Interview
RSO	F			Interview
RSO	F			Interview
RSO	F			Interview
PB	F	Health		Interview
PB	F	Engineering		Interview
PB	F	Engineering		Interview
PB	M	Psychology/Counselling		Interview
Policy	M			Interview
Refugee	M	Youth Work	Afghanistan	Informant
Refugee	F	Economist	Iran	Informant
Refugee	M	Nurse	Ethiopia	Informant
Refugee + RSO	F	Economist	Ethiopia	Informant
Refugee + RSO	M	Pharmacist	Cameroon	Informant
Refugee + RSO	M			Informant
RSO	F			Informant
RSO	F			Informant
RSO	F			Informant
RSO	M			Informant
PB	F	Languages		Informant
PB	F	Health		Informant
PB	M	Education		Informant
Policy	F			Informant

## Refugee experiences

The importance of their profession to their identity and life was evident for all, as exemplified by a teacher from Pakistan:

*I'm a career woman. I have to do job that is very important for me and for my family. I have to work; I can't just sit at home cooking and cleaning. My job was very, very important to me.*

What was also universal was their experience of a lack of clear information about the specialist requirements for entering professions, and for some what they later realised was incorrect advice. They described how it would have been helpful early in their journey to have people to talk to about how their professional background could be transferred to UK, and how to find information about applying for jobs, workplace culture and practices:

*I'm still not full confidence [sic] about my English, but I'm confident about my skills ... But the thing that I wasn't confident about and I'm not still, it's I don't know the process of working in the UK. Counsellor*

*I know very little about it. That's that would be my first concern is that I just don't know what, what's out there. I don't know what's the practice. Engineer*

Some felt that employers were not interested in people from their background, or they had experienced some cultural differences in applying for jobs. In the UK during the interview process you are expected to sell yourself and talk about achievements, whereas in their country of origin this would be considered arrogance. And others found themselves in the situation reported in the literature:

*I was trying to apply but I couldn't get the job straight away to the engineering field because I didn't have experience in the UK. So a lot of people were saying ohh this is good, what you did is good but you ... never worked here. So we need you at least to [have] worked here so we can give you the job. Engineer*

Even if they potentially did have the skills and knowledge to be able to gain a job in their sector, their experiences and circumstances meant they were cautious. Refugees by definition have had disrupted lives and may be reluctant to relocate having built social and support networks. An engineer said, “someone like me, I just want to make sure that wherever I go, I feel safe, welcomed and encouraged, same as anyone else.” He was nervous about taking that final step into an organisation he did not know, and this suggests a clear role for a supportive mentor in the profession and workplace.

There were success stories though, and one engineer described how once he found work, he discovered others with a similar background which made him feel less alone – further testimony to the importance of the profession for social contact and emotional health as well as income and job satisfaction. An accountant had struggled to find employment but on joining a general buddying scheme organised by a refugee support organisation, she was paired with a retired accountant. He was able to offer advice on job search and application processes, and shortly after she was offered a job for a probationary 3-month period, which was then made a permanent offer:

*I got a contract with the one letting agency they offer me an administrative and financial role. I will be involved in two areas of the company and it's really great for me because it's a challenge in the beginning because it's difficult to get at that kind of job here for migrants ... It's given me a background about the laws and rules and the financial sector here in the UK because each country have their own rules and laws about financial and different areas of jobs.*

### *Engagement with a professional body*

None of the refugees interviewed had made any attempt to contact a professional body for support or guidance. An engineer from Ukraine said that there wasn't the equivalent of a professional body in her country, so it hadn't occurred to her that such a thing existed. Others knew of them but were unsure of what to do because of the way the wider profession was structured in the UK. A refugee lawyer said *"In my ... country of origin there is no distinction between barrister and solicitor"* so the distinction and different routes were not clear to him. Two refugees described their work as psychology/counselling, but despite considerable experience (and good English) they had been unable to get paid work. They considered their profession and work to be a single entity, but psychology and counselling in the UK have different professional bodies and entirely separate degree courses and requirements leading to professional qualification. Another did not contact the professional body because they lacked confidence to approach them:

*"No, honestly, no. Because I didn't feel confident in the first of all, toward the language, and I say I thought maybe I cannot offer my the best of me ... Or maybe they ask me some question and maybe I don't know how to answer if they ask me in English because I have the knowledge in in my language, but I don't know how can I answer in English."* Accountant

While evidently not perfect English, the person was able to participate in the interview and so presumably work if she possessed the technical knowledge. These responses all indicate a role for professional bodies in outreach, demystifying their profession (or their role within it), and offering a welcoming and supportive environment. Conversations with a mentor from the profession could be very useful in developing the vocabulary of accountancy (or any other field) as well as other work-related skills which are needed to register:

*[There] are a higher proportion of Certificate of Proficiency fails for applicants whose first language is not English, and this applies to those who have a good grasp of the language. Some of the difficulties lie in different UK contexts rather than the language barrier e.g. ... different work contexts etc.* Professional Body

### *Existing provision*

There are concerns across a range of sectors about skills shortages caused by leaving the EU and the problems of qualification recognition, and while there is some awareness of the potential of people already in the UK, how they are supported is not clear: *"at the moment there's not a signposting service for professional people coming from, let's say, Ukraine or wherever it is now"* (Policy Organisation). There is also awareness of a growing need for support:

*I think the for us, the refugee thing has sort of just happened in the background and it's been a handful of cases every year. I would say it's now a handful of cases every month, and I can definitely feel it's stepping up at the moment and there's very regular contact at the moment.* Engineering Professional Body

The quality and timeliness of Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) given to refugees to support their integration is key. This is known to be highly variable in the case of English language provision (Hann et al., 2021) where lack of outreach and effective initial assessment and referral to appropriate courses prolongs the time to gain employment. A similar picture emerges for guidance by refugee support organisations whose staff may not be fully equipped to provide the specialised support needed (Learning and Work Institute, 2019; Tweed & Stacey, 2018). Well-meaning people can give advice which is counter-productive, so *"My English teacher in college or a job counsellor in the college, I got some advice from them"* was described by a refugee

psychologist and counsellor who had a Masters qualification and many years professional experience. She was advised that she would need to start with an undergraduate degree (with associated cost and time required) before she could think of returning to practice. These issues and the limits to their expertise are recognised by refugee support organisations, who wish to engage with experts:

*candidates have always said to us that's one of the things that they want. They want to ... meet fellow professionals and we will never be able to provide that and the insight that those professionals in those sectors can provide directly to our clients. So we're really keen to continue to do that.* Refugee Support Organisation

Several professional bodies acknowledged they had no current provision, although some were developing it as part of general equality and diversity policy revisions. Others recognised this was a serious gap, both in terms of the refugees themselves and also the skills they would bring to the profession to support their clients, and were motivated to respond.

Of those professional bodies who were providing at least some explicit support for refugees, some were able to do so by extending existing activities. So a mentoring scheme for their members, for example.

*The mentoring service covers a vast range of things, from people in relatively high-powered jobs in the UK who want a career mentor, to someone who's on a formal training scheme and want someone to mentor them through that to get their professional qualification. ... Overseas people who might just want someone to have a chat to about how to how the industry works here. So it's really broad, so they would put on there what they're after in terms of being mentored and the mentors can access that and say yes, I'm prepared to do that or not.* Engineering PB

There was nothing specifically for refugees, although if they did contact the organisation via a general enquiry, they were offered support, including a reduced membership fee which gave them full access to all the resources including a mentor. There was an acknowledgement that clearer guidance for refugees would be helpful, and what was needed was *"more transparency on the website. A really deliberate place on the website which says, 'if this is you' click here, talk to us."*

The literature shows that evidencing their credentials and having their qualifications recognised is one of the biggest barriers facing refugees globally, so it is encouraging that some professional bodies are recognising this and developing process to include them:

*The other thing that we find we have to be very mindful of is the fact that ... refugees come to us with very little in the way of documentary evidence. You know, they've obviously left, often with very little in the way of possessions and strangely degree certificates and stuff ... was not high on their list at the time, which is absolutely understandable. So we're quite flexible in terms of the paperwork that we require of them to prove anything, quite flexible around how they demonstrate their previous career history, that kind of thing. We're just, you know, a lot of it is done much more through conversation than it is through bits of paper.* Engineering PB

*What we're hearing that, you know, they don't have the certificates and they they don't necessarily have their CV or it's not translated into English. So we're ignoring all that, because normally you'd go through a quite comprehensive application process. So we're ignoring that, and saying come on board as a member and we'll work with you to try and support. So we're offering and we're waiving the fees for two years, so they come on board. So we're just, we're sort of just launching this now. Now we need to find the people.* Engineering PB

These changes to processes internal to the organisation and profession are important but they also recognise what else is needed to fully support people, *"we're not very good at helping people to develop their English skills and all the rest, so we started a collaboration with REN [Refugee Employment Network]"* (Engineering

PB), and “*what we're struggling with is then I suppose we haven't worked out how to get them employed*” (Engineering PB).

Finally, even in professions with the most extensive support and provision, working with employers and refugee support organisations, there can still be barriers to overcome:

*So we had a long waiting period for bookings between exams. And now I'm waiting to book the next one, and there aren't any available. And by the end of this year, the first exam, which would be the English one, would expire, so [I] would have to retake the first one again and start from the beginning, which is one of the issues we struggled with. Refugee doctor*

The same person also noted that he was required to pay fees and any travel costs up front, and while he could claim them back, the initial outlay is a problem when on a low income. There were also some internships/shadowing roles advertised but not local to him and moving his family for a temporary position was not feasible.

### ***Embedded and sustainable provision***

A recurring theme talking to workers in refugee support organisations, and also evident from the literature, was the problem of short-term project funding. It takes time to develop expertise and networks, and there can be some successes, but when funding ends momentum is lost. It is also a problem when initiatives are over-dependent on one or two key individuals rather than an embedded process. As observed by one RSO manager:

*We didn't have meetings afterwards. The agreement [with the professional body] was that the financial support would be provided and then you have a person changes, somebody else comes in, you start the whole process all over again. ... And in a lot of cases, that is the situation, where you have something good, and [the] initiative stops. Not for a lack of wanting to have it, it just kind of fizzles.*

Given this context a number of organisations and partnerships have developed initiatives which are more embedded in work and so more sustainable. As noted previously, a longer-standing scheme is the [Building Bridges](#) programme in London, a multi-agency partnership which has been running since 2009 to support refugee health professionals including doctors, pharmacists, dentists, biomedical scientists, physiotherapists and nurses to work in the NHS (Butt et al., 2019). Two other initiatives are interesting because of different sector focus and business models.

[Renaissi](#) is a social enterprise in London which has a ‘Transitions’ programme to build the careers of refugee professionals. This is achieved through a programme of mentoring and coaching for the individuals, who are then connected to employers with vacancies. The team has built a network of employers and has helped them increase awareness, train mentors and develop inclusive recruitment programmes. If placed, the refugee gets 6-months of in-work support, and the employer pay a recruitment fee. The initial focus was areas of acute skills shortages, including construction and engineering professionals, but it has expanded to encompass more professions including finance, IT, and general management. Given the range of professions, professional bodies (and regulators) can be key partners, and connections have been for mutual benefit:

*Working with the [professional] bodies actually has been fantastic as well, so ... the civil engineers ... they've got kind of a big fairness and inclusion and respect programme that they run, so kind of mining those avenues was always great. Renaissi manager*

[PAZ](#) is a social impact company which trains and mentors refugee professionals in the IT sector to adapt their knowledge and experience to the needs of the global tech industry. While requiring high level skills, IT is not a regulated sector with a need to formally benchmark qualifications and register to practice, and employers are more interested in experience and skillset rather than certificates. This is an important distinction and drives the approach of the support offered.

*In the case of technology it was very apparent because of this skills shortage that if they only focus on who has a certificate, and especially if the certificate needs to be from the UK, then they are narrowing their talent pool so much that it made no sense. So instead what we did was instead of sending the CVs of our participants, we have a spreadsheet where we put ... what language ... this person speaks; what are their top technical skills, their secondary skills, the skills that they are learning so they are getting better at, but perhaps they're not ready yet to be able to say ohh I can work on this, but it's very good in technology since technology moves so fast. What they want to see are people that have the capacity to learn to adapt and that are not dependent on others to tell them what to do. PAZ manager*

The support includes mentors with both the specific technical skills in the area of expertise, and also those who focus on the more general soft skills required. Refugees who had gone through the programme spoke about the importance of this dual approach, as there can be a tendency to over-focus on the purely technical skills, as noted in earlier work and other professions:

*I found it strange answering things like: give examples of your team skills or communication skills. I did not understand. What's the point? A doctor is a doctor whatever ... I've heard a lot of people saying things like: what are you giving to the job? Everybody tells me to prepare for such questions. That seems out of context, if you are to do a job good you are to work hard. That is all. (Female doctor) (Willott & Stevenson, 2013, p. 128)*

The scheme is free at point of use, but successful candidates who achieve employment as a result commit to paying a percentage of their salary, once established and a threshold value has been exceeded, up to an agreed amount. Many of those who have passed through return as mentors.

# Synthesis and Overview

The three strands of this research were designed to be complementary, bringing together insights from the global literature relating to the employment of highly skilled refugees and how professional bodies support them, a sample of what some professional bodies in the UK are currently doing, and contributions from refugees themselves, refugee support organisations and professional bodies.

Both the literature and discussion with project informants are consistent in identifying the key barriers. In general refugees lack early access to appropriate language support, access to high quality information, advice and guidance (IAG) and professional networks, recognition of qualifications and skills assessment, high quality mentoring, job search assistance, CV and interview preparation, and volunteering or work placement opportunities.

The research has revealed that, with a few exceptions, the literature is largely blind to the potential role of professional bodies other than as institutions accrediting qualifications where they are a regulator. They are not represented as having the capacity through their operations and members to be agents for change in any of the other problem areas. This is a significant conceptual and practical omission.

There is a huge diversity of professional bodies in the UK, with, to an outsider, a confusing array of names, terminology, roles, powers, relationships, degrees of specialism, and geographical reach. While some may recognise refugees as potential client groups, few professional bodies acknowledge that there are those with the skills or capacity to work in their profession, and even fewer provide clear and accessible support for those wishing to do so.

Access to the professions is analogous to the related issue of addressing barriers for refugees entering higher education (Lambrechts, 2020). Institutional factors are controlled by the university (or professional body in our case) such as the quality of accessible information, credentials required, and levels of financial support. Situational factors relate to the circumstances of the individual, such as unfamiliarity with processes, relative poverty, and language skills. Just as Lambrechts argues for universities, rather than perpetuating the deficit model of refugees, where it is their responsibility to address situational factors, it is the duty of the professional body to recognise and accommodate them.

There are though some areas of good practice, and evidence of much goodwill and willingness to understand how support could be improved. No organisation can provide the full range of support needed acting alone, and there are some innovative and effective partnerships between refugee employment and support organisations, professional bodies and employers, notably in the health, IT and engineering sectors which could be used as models and developed.

# Recommendations

The collected research in this project has highlighted a range of ways in which professional bodies could further support refugees into work, and the guidance they need.

- **Recognition of the issues and ways they can help**

Professional bodies are understandably focused on their discipline and practice, supporting members, promoting the profession, and for some regulating standards. There may be initiatives to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion more broadly, but few seem aware of the presence and needs of professionally qualified refugees and how they might be supported

- Outreach to Refugee Support Organisations

Knowledge of refugee issues, such as legal and employment entitlements, barriers, and best practice in supporting them is potentially confusing. There are a wide range of national and local agencies with expertise (see Appendix 1) who will be able to offer guidance and support, and could develop a partnership

- Gendered issues

While all refugees face barriers to employment, and different individuals will have diverse experiences, the evidence suggests there is a particular problem for professional women in (re)establishing their careers, so sensitivity to this and expert support may be needed

- Proactive approach

Organisations should be active in their efforts, rather than considering that they have processes in place if contacted. As well as (possibly) an institution which can accredit skills and qualifications if applicants meet the criteria, a professional body is an organisation comprising members (and via them, employers) who by definition have the skillsets, workplace knowledge, networks, and experience to be able to help those in need

- Embed and mainstream support

Many projects and initiatives falter when people change or project funding ends. Work needs to be embedded within the organisation so there is continuity. Include it as part of an Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) strategy and monitoring, with reports to the Board or members

- **Clear and accessible advice**

- Websites

These are clearly the main sources of information. Appropriate links should be on the homepage or easily discoverable, with a contact person & email for enquiries – which works and gets a reply! Ensure information valuable to users is not in members-only areas

- Simple guide to the profession

The information should be clear about any regulatory role, including explanation of why membership or accreditation is important or valuable. If there are different regulatory and



professional bodies, or a range of similar alternative bodies then provide a guide to the differences. There may not be professional bodies in the refugees' country of origin, or one may cover a range of disciplines with separate organisations in the UK

- Clear to both refugees and those supporting them

Information may be sought by refugee professionals themselves, or by 'non-expert' people working for refugee support organisations or in a mentoring or buddying scheme to help their service users. Information needs to be accessible and clear to both these groups, using plain English and with terms explained.

- Inclusive & 'can do'

Adopting an encouraging and inclusive tone, rather than just a list of all the things they need to do to enter the profession. Case studies and success stories are encouraging, and videos can be more engaging and more accessible than just text

- Alternate career pathways

Not all refugees will be able to continue in their previous career, or may wish to change. Information and support for what alternatives they might consider given their skills will be valuable

- **Qualifications**

- Accreditation

Provide clear and accessible pathways to recognising qualifications. Refugees may not have certificates and transcripts with them. Consider qualification equivalence, and processes for recognising prior experience and learning (RPEL). Provide benchmarking where they are in their career to assist employers, and skills-based assessments, not just mapping certificates

- Fee waivers

The cost of registration or accreditation can be prohibitive to many refugees, so fee waivers would remove this significant barrier. Even if there are schemes to refund payments, the initial outlay can be a problem.

- Early support

Skills are devalued and lost without practice. Even if individuals are not immediately ready for the UK workplace, being clear about precisely what is required, and how they can get there will prevent significant wastage. Provide appropriate support early, rather than when they have achieved other targets such as qualifications or language proficiency

- **Experience**

- Mentoring / coaching scheme

Many people volunteer to mentor or buddy refugees as part of schemes run by refugee support organisations, including those in professions. Matching people is extremely beneficial but subject to chance and so ad hoc. Publicise this to members, calling for those willing to act as a specialised mentor to an individual. Maintain a volunteer database,

including information such as specialist subject areas, geographic location (for people wishing to meet in person) and language skills or previous experience if they themselves are a migrant. There may be people with refugee backgrounds who are willing to provide lived experience and guidance for the organisation. Reach out to refugee support organisations who are familiar with the mentoring schemes and can offer training.

- Access to events

Allow refugees to attend events, meetings and workshops organised by the profession. Publicise them via refugee support organisations who will be able to reach out to service users

- Engage employers

Placements and work shadowing opportunities are extremely important as an entry to the UK workplace and professional culture. Members are employees and can engage their employers, with advocacy and support by the professional body, to participate and potentially gain valuable skills

- Volunteering and placements with the professional body

A role within the professional body, such as administrative support, shadowing, and the opportunity to look at applications and attend events would help develop knowledge of the profession and language.

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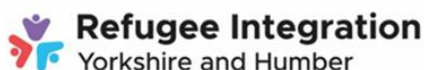
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# Appendices

## Appendix 1 Organisations supporting skilled refugee employment

 <b>REFUGEE EMPLOYMENT NETWORK</b>	<p><b>Refugee Employment Network (REN)</b> a charity “that ensures that refugees in the UK can access appropriate, fulfilling, paid employment or self-employment.”</p> <p><a href="https://refugeeemploymentnetwork.co.uk">https://refugeeemploymentnetwork.co.uk</a></p>
	<p><b>REFUAID</b> “support access to language tuition, education, finance and meaningful employment.”</p> <p><a href="https://refuaid.org/">https://refuaid.org/</a></p>
	<p><b>Refugees &amp; Mentors</b> supports people seeking asylum, refugees and vulnerable migrants to improve their employment prospects and get jobs. Based in Manchester</p> <p><a href="https://refmentors.org.uk/">https://refmentors.org.uk/</a></p>
	<p><b>PAZ</b> “Empowering forcibly displaced tech talent”</p> <p>We train professionals looking to adapt their knowledge and experience to the needs of the global tech industry.</p> <p><a href="https://www.paz.ai/">https://www.paz.ai/</a></p>
	<p><b>Renaishi</b> is a social enterprise that helps employers build inclusive workforces by restarting the careers of refugee professionals so everyone can thrive. Their candidates are a mix of engineers, built environment and business services professionals, resident across the UK with right to work.</p> <p><a href="https://renaisi.com/transitions/">https://renaisi.com/transitions/</a></p>
	<p>The Building Bridges programme is an NHS funded partnership for Refugee Health Professionals living in London. Assists them to re-qualify to UK standards and secure employment appropriate to their professional qualifications.</p> <p><a href="https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/get-support/services/refugee-health-professionals-building-bridges-programme/">https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/get-support/services/refugee-health-professionals-building-bridges-programme/</a></p> <p>Video available at</p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W-R3y99SWmM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W-R3y99SWmM</a></p>

	<p>Ecctis operates official recognition services on behalf of the UK Government, including:</p> <p><b>UK ENIC:</b> the UK National Information Centre for global qualifications and skills. (Was previously UK NARIC until the UK's departure from the European Union).</p> <p><b>The UK Centre for Professional Qualifications (UK CPQ):</b> covers all aspects of professional qualifications in an international context. Provides advice and guidance to a variety of stakeholders, including professionals, professional bodies, employers, and sector skills councils.</p> <p><a href="https://www.ecctis.com">https://www.ecctis.com</a></p>
	<p>Unlocking skilled migration for refugees “match skilled refugees with companies in need of their skills.”</p> <p><a href="https://www.talentbeyondboundaries.org/">https://www.talentbeyondboundaries.org/</a></p>
	<p>Supports refugees into meaningful employment with advice, experience and education</p> <p><a href="https://breaking-barriers.co.uk/">https://breaking-barriers.co.uk/</a></p>
	<p><a href="#">Cara</a> (the Council for At-Risk Academics) supports university academics, both in their home country, and if forced to flee, with mentoring, placements, and work via partner universities to rebuild their lives.</p>

## Appendix 2 Professional Body websites searched

\* Indicates those organisations who responded to the BEIS: The Recognition of Professional Qualifications and Regulation of Professions: Call for Evidence

Organisation	Website	BEIS
Architects Registration Board	<a href="https://arb.org.uk">https://arb.org.uk</a>	*
Association of Accounting Technicians	<a href="https://www.aat.org.uk">https://www.aat.org.uk</a>	*
Association of Chartered Certified Accountants	<a href="https://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en.html">https://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en.html</a>	
British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy	<a href="https://www.bacp.co.uk">https://www.bacp.co.uk</a>	
British Computer Society	<a href="https://www.bcs.org">https://www.bcs.org</a>	*
British Psychological Society	<a href="https://www.bps.org.uk">https://www.bps.org.uk</a>	
Chartered Association of Building Engineers	<a href="https://cbuide.com">https://cbuide.com</a>	
Chartered Banking Institute	<a href="https://www.charteredbanker.com">https://www.charteredbanker.com</a>	
Chartered College of Teaching	<a href="https://chartered.college">https://chartered.college</a>	
Chartered Institute for Archaeologists	<a href="https://www.archaeologists.net">https://www.archaeologists.net</a>	
Chartered Institute of Building	<a href="https://www.ciob.org">https://www.ciob.org</a>	*
Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers	<a href="https://www.cibse.org">https://www.cibse.org</a>	
Chartered institute of Credit Management	<a href="https://www.cicm.com">https://www.cicm.com</a>	*
Chartered Institute of Housing	<a href="https://www.cih.org">https://www.cih.org</a>	
Chartered Institute of Linguists	<a href="https://www.ciol.org.uk">https://www.ciol.org.uk</a>	*
Chartered Institute of Marketing	<a href="https://www.cim.co.uk">https://www.cim.co.uk</a>	
Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development	<a href="https://www.cipd.co.uk">https://www.cipd.co.uk</a>	*
Chartered Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineering	<a href="https://www.ciphe.org.uk">https://www.ciphe.org.uk</a>	*
Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply	<a href="https://www.cips.org">https://www.cips.org</a>	
Chartered Institute of Securities and Investment	<a href="https://www.cisi.org/cisiweb2">https://www.cisi.org/cisiweb2</a>	
Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management	<a href="https://www.ciwem.org">https://www.ciwem.org</a>	
Chartered Institution of Railway Operators	<a href="https://www.ciro.org">https://www.ciro.org</a>	
Chartered Society of Designers	<a href="https://www.csd.org.uk">https://www.csd.org.uk</a>	
Chartered Society of Physiotherapists	<a href="https://www.csp.org.uk">https://www.csp.org.uk</a>	
Energy Institute	<a href="https://www.energyinst.org">https://www.energyinst.org</a>	
General Medical Council	<a href="https://www.gmc-uk.org">https://www.gmc-uk.org</a>	*
General Pharmaceutical Council	<a href="https://www.pharmacyregulation.org">https://www.pharmacyregulation.org</a>	*
Health and Care Professionals Council	<a href="https://www.hcpc-uk.org">https://www.hcpc-uk.org</a>	*
Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales	<a href="https://www.icaew.com">https://www.icaew.com</a>	*
Institute of Physics	<a href="https://www.iop.org">https://www.iop.org</a>	
Institution of Agricultural Engineers	<a href="https://iagre.org">https://iagre.org</a>	
Institution of Civil Engineers	<a href="https://www.ice.org.uk">https://www.ice.org.uk</a>	

Institution of Engineering and Technology	<a href="https://www.theiet.org">https://www.theiet.org</a>	
Institution of Mechanical Engineers	<a href="https://www.imeche.org">https://www.imeche.org</a>	
Nursing and Midwifery Council	<a href="https://www.nmc.org.uk">https://www.nmc.org.uk</a>	*
Royal Asiatic Society of GB and Ireland	<a href="https://royalasiaticsociety.org">https://royalasiaticsociety.org</a>	
Royal Society of Biology	<a href="https://www.rsb.org.uk">https://www.rsb.org.uk</a>	
Royal Society of Chemistry	<a href="https://www.rsc.org">https://www.rsc.org</a>	*
Royal Town Planning Institute	<a href="https://www.rtpi.org.uk">https://www.rtpi.org.uk</a>	
Social Work England	<a href="https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk">https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk</a>	*
Teaching Regulation Agency	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/teaching-regulation-agency">https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/teaching-regulation-agency</a>	*
The Geological Society	<a href="https://www.geolsoc.org.uk">https://www.geolsoc.org.uk</a>	

## Appendix 3 Materials sent to research participants and informants

### Information Sheet for refugees



This project is co-funded by the European Union Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. Making management of migration flows more efficient across the European Union.



Hello, [Refugee/TCN]

You are warmly invited to take part in a research project with the title *ABM4 Refugee Integration Yorkshire and Humber (RIYH)*. It is carried out by *Migration Yorkshire*, who are also the Project Lead Organisation, and Leeds Beckett University (LBU). The project is funded by the *European Union Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund*.

Through the research project, we aim to produce

- A Best Practice Toolkit for Outreach, Initial Assessment and Guidance to support refugees and Third Country Nationals (TCNs) into appropriate education and training.
- A review of the policies and activities of professional bodies and a best practice guide, to support refugees and other TCNs into employment in their disciplines.

To produce these two items, we welcome your participation in this project. If you are over 18 and agree to participate, we will ask you to take part in a short online interview about your experiences of education and work, and the Information, Advice and Guidance you have received. As part of this, you will be asked to think about your experiences using a timeline tool which will be explained in the interview. The interview will be recorded with your consent. After the interview, we may contact you for further clarification.

All information gathered from you will be confidential, anonymised and stored on a password protected device. Only the research team will have access to the data you provide. The data will be destroyed 8 years after the end of the project. To agree to take part in his project, please complete the next section. You will be given a copy of the full Informed Consent Form.

You are not obliged to take part in this study and are free to withdraw at any time. Should you choose to withdraw, you may do so without disadvantage to yourself and without any obligation to give a reason or explanation.

If you have any questions about the research, you can contact us, using the details below.

Name	Email
Dr John Willott, LBU Principal Investigator Leeds School of Social Sciences	<a href="mailto:J.Willott@leedsbeckett.ac.uk">J.Willott@leedsbeckett.ac.uk</a>
Dr Naeema Hann, Co-Investigator, Carnegie School of Education	<a href="mailto:N.Hann@leedsbeckett.ac.uk">N.Hann@leedsbeckett.ac.uk</a>
Dr Nicole Whitworth, Co-Investigator, Carnegie School of Education	<a href="mailto:N.Whitworth@leedsbeckett.ac.uk">N.Whitworth@leedsbeckett.ac.uk</a>

To raise any concerns or issues with the research, please contact Migration Yorkshire's Policy and Research Manager Dr Pip Tyler: [Pip.Tyler@migrationyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:Pip.Tyler@migrationyorkshire.org.uk).

Thank you for your attention.

John Willott, Naeema Hann and Nicole Whitworth (LBU Research Project Team)

## Consent form (all participants)



This project is co-funded by the European Union Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. Making management of migration flows more efficient across the European Union.



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### Consent Form ABM4 Refugee Integration Yorkshire and Humber (RIYH)

- |  |          |
|--|----------|
| I confirm that I am over 18 years old  | Yes / No |
| I have read the information on page 1 of this document which describes the research in which I have been asked to participate and I understand what I am being asked to do.  | Yes / No |
| I consent to take part in an interview for this study.   | Yes / No |
| I consent to the interview being recorded.   | Yes / No |
| I consent to the contents of the interview being transcribed.  | Yes / No |
| I consent to notes being taken during the interview.   | Yes / No |
| I understand that the contents of the interview will be confidential – seen only by the research team.   | Yes / No |
| I consent to my words being quoted anonymously in any presentations, reports or publications arising from the research unless I specifically agree otherwise.  | Yes / No |
| I understand that all data collected from and about me will be kept safely and securely.   | Yes / No |
| I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time before analysis and writing are completed and that, if I choose, all information collected about and from me will be destroyed at that point. | Yes / No |
| I understand that data will not be kept longer than is necessary to complete a full analysis. It will then be securely archived and destroyed 8 years after the completion of the project.                                 | Yes / No |

Participant's name (BLOCK CAPITALS):

Participant's signature:

Date:

Researcher's name (BLOCK CAPITALS):

Researcher's signature:

Date:



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Hello,

We are contacting you to ask for your assistance with recruiting participants to take part in a research project with the title *ABM4 Refugee Integration Yorkshire and Humber (RIYH)*. It is carried out by *Migration Yorkshire*, who are also the Project Lead Organisation, and Leeds Beckett University (LBU). The project is funded by the *European Union Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund*.

Through the research project, we aim to produce

- A Best Practice Toolkit for Outreach, Initial Assessment and Guidance to support refugees and Third Country Nationals (TCNs, i.e. not EU citizens) into appropriate education and training.
- A review of the policies and activities of professional bodies and a best practice guide, to support refugees and other TCNs into employment in their disciplines.

To produce these two items, we are looking for participants who are refugees or TCNs. Participants who agree to participate will be asked to take part in short online interview which will be recorded with their consent. The research project has been granted ethical approval via the Leeds Beckett Research Ethics Committee.

If you have any questions about the research, you can contact us, using the details below.

Name	Email
Dr John Willott, LBU Principal Investigator Leeds School of Social Sciences	<a href="mailto:J.Willott@leedsbeckett.ac.uk">J.Willott@leedsbeckett.ac.uk</a>
Dr Naeema Hann, Co-Investigator, Carnegie School of Education	<a href="mailto:N.Hann@leedsbeckett.ac.uk">N.Hann@leedsbeckett.ac.uk</a>
Dr Nicole Whitworth, Co-Investigator, Carnegie School of Education	<a href="mailto:N.Whitworth@leedsbeckett.ac.uk">N.Whitworth@leedsbeckett.ac.uk</a>

To raise any concerns or issues with the research, please contact Migration Yorkshire's Policy and Research Manager Dr Pip Tyler: [Pip.Tyler@migrationyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:Pip.Tyler@migrationyorkshire.org.uk).

Thank you for your attention.

John Willott, Naeema Hann and Nicole Whitworth (LBU Research Project Team)



This project is co-funded by the European Union Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. Making management of migration flows more efficient across the European Union.



Hello,

Thank you for agreeing to support our research project *ABM4 Refugee Integration Yorkshire and Humber (RIYH)*, where we plan to produce:

- A Best Practice Toolkit for Outreach, Initial Assessment and Guidance to support refugees and Third Country Nationals (TCNs, i.e. not EU citizens) into appropriate education and training.
- A review of the policies and activities of professional bodies and a best practice guide, to support refugees and other TCNs into employment in their disciplines.

As you are aware, we are looking for adult (over 18 years old) participants who are refugees or TCNs to understand their experiences and inform the guides. Participants who agree to participate will be asked to take part in short online interview.

Your service users include people in these groups, and we are very grateful that you are willing to signpost them to the project. As such, you are acting as Gatekeepers, so we wanted to highlight important considerations when supporting research in this way.

- Please emphasise the voluntary nature of participation in the research.
- While the research and associated questions are not of a sensitive personal nature, we are conscious that some people may be vulnerable due to previous experiences, so we ask you to consider this when signposting people.
- Please make sure you do not attempt to persuade or encourage participants to take part at any point.
- Please emphasise that choosing to participate in the project or not will not affect their use of your services in any way. Similarly, for those who participate, their interviews are confidential, and their responses will not affect their access to services.
- If a participant contacts you about taking part in the research, please ensure they have read the information sheet and consent form.
- If you are unsure about any aspect of the research, please contact one of the research team below
- If a participant who has read the information sheet and consent form asks you more about the research, please advise them you had no part in the design or content of the research and refer them to us.

Thank you for your attention.

John Willott, Naeema Hann and Nicole Whitworth (LBU Research Project Team)

Name	Email
Dr John Willott, LBU <i>Principal Investigator</i> <i>Leeds School of Social Sciences</i>	<a href="mailto:J.Willott@leedsbeckett.ac.uk">J.Willott@leedsbeckett.ac.uk</a>
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To raise any concerns or issues with the research, please contact Migration Yorkshire's Policy and Research Manager Dr Pip Tyler: [Pip.Tyler@migrationyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:Pip.Tyler@migrationyorkshire.org.uk).





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### Professional & Regulatory Body Information Sheet

You are warmly invited to take part in a research project with the title *ABM4 Refugee Integration Yorkshire and Humber (RIYH)*. It is carried out by *Migration Yorkshire*, who are also the Project Lead Organisation, and Leeds Beckett University (LBU). The project is funded by the *European Union Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund*.

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- A Best Practice Toolkit for Outreach, Initial Assessment and Guidance to support refugees and Third Country Nationals (TCNs) into appropriate education and training.
- A review of the policies and activities of professional bodies and a best practice guide, to support refugees and other TCNs into employment in their disciplines.

To produce these two items, we welcome your participation in this project. If you are over 18 and agree to participate, we will ask you to take part in short online interview to understand your support for refugees and TCNs, or what further support and information they might need to develop their outreach. This will be recorded with your consent. After the interview, we may contact you for further clarification.

All information gathered from you will be confidential, anonymised and stored on a password protected device. Only the research team will have access to the data you provide. The data will be destroyed 8 years after the end of the project. To agree to take part in this project, please complete the next section. You will be given a copy of the full Informed Consent Form.

You are not obliged to take part in this study and are free to withdraw at any time. Should you choose to withdraw, you may do so without disadvantage to yourself and without any obligation to give a reason or explanation.

If you have any questions about the research, you can contact us, using the details below.

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To raise any concerns or issues with the research, please contact Migration Yorkshire's Policy and Research Manager Dr Pip Tyler: [Pip.Tyler@migrationyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:Pip.Tyler@migrationyorkshire.org.uk).

Thank you for your attention.

John Willott, Naeema Hann and Nicole Whitworth (LBU Research Project Team)