



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

## **Working English North Project Evaluation**

**Evaluation Brief – January 2019**

### **Introduction**

Refugee Action has 37 years' experience providing specialist advice and support to refugees and people seeking asylum. Our beneficiaries are some of the most vulnerable people in the country having fled torture, persecution and war; since 2001 we have supported over 70,000 refugees and people seeking asylum. Embedded in the refugee sector, we collaborate with colleagues to deliver and scale innovative practice that addresses the causes of poverty and injustice experienced by our beneficiaries and empower them to rebuild their lives. Under our 2016-19 strategy we are helping people seeking asylum to live free from poverty, to access justice and rebuild their lives. We are also enabling organisations supporting vulnerable people from refugee and migrant backgrounds to strengthen their service capability and maximise our collective impact. We are also researching and identifying the systemic barriers that create obstacles to successful integration and developing policy initiatives to effect positive change.

### **Working English North**

Working English North is funded by Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the Rayne Foundation and was set up to tackle the barriers to employment experienced by refugees in two significant population centres in the north of England: Greater Manchester and Bradford. The project aims to increase the integration of people from refugee backgrounds by addressing their pre-employment barriers, by supporting them to improve their working English, navigate the job market, take positive action towards their employment goals, whilst also addressing systemic barriers to employment. In particular, the project aims to demonstrate the critical importance of 'pre-employment' support in helping refugees furthest from the job market to move towards job readiness and mainstream employment programmes. The project also intends to leave a legacy of evidence-based policy



frameworks to address the critical gaps in ESOL provision and the impact of benefits issues on refugee employment.

More specifically, the aims of the project are to:

- Offer activities in the integration of refugees at a national, local and regional level that will enable people from refugee backgrounds to achieve:
- Increased readiness to engage with the job market.
- Improve their employability by taking positive action e.g. secure volunteer or job placement, access vocational training, or statutory ESOL courses.
- Secure income support to enable them to focus on their employability pathway.

It also aims to develop local, regional and national policy frameworks/measures/tools for the integration of refugees that will address systemic barriers to employment for people from refugee backgrounds by providing:

- Evidence-based policy frameworks that provide solutions to the gaps in ESOL and 'English for work' provision to improve refugee integration outcomes;
- Evidence-based policy frameworks that resolve the current challenges caused by the benefits system to improve refugees' integration journeys;
- Innovative tools for enabling people from refugee backgrounds to increase employability through group work and mentoring, including a toolkit for other providers to use.

People from refugee backgrounds experience many barriers to becoming 'job ready' after they settle in the UK either through resettlement programmes or having being granted refugee status after an asylum application. This sometimes leads to unrealistic expectations of job outcomes in relatively narrow timeframes. It is our experience that people need targeted support to successfully transition from the refugee resettlement or the receipt of leave to remain phase of their lives. They need support to be able to engage effectively with mainstream employment programmes and achieve some of the most fundamental job outcomes, such as attending an interview or securing work.

Our Working English North approach supports people from refugee backgrounds to understand the 'culture' of the UK job market, building their ability to progress in what may seem an intimidating area. We do this by increasing their confidence in using 'English language for the work place', increase awareness of skills and work experience and how they relate to the job market, and supports people for the first time to identify short and longer term employment goals and move towards them. 'Working English' also provides expert support to address other life crises that



prevent refugees from focusing on their employment journey, such as problems with benefits and housing tenancy issues, etc.

Working English North does this through three interlinked activities:

1. The Working English group employability course;
2. The Working English employment mentoring service;
3. And a crisis casework service that addresses the life crises that prevent refugees from focussing on their journey to work.

In addition to direct support for refugees, the project also aims to:

1. Develop evidence-based frameworks around gaps in English language provision and in particular how this provision can enhance refugees' journeys towards employment, building on our current campaign 'Let Refugees' Learn'.
2. Develop an evidence base of how challenges with Universal Credit and other benefits impact on refugees' ability to engage with their journey towards employment;
3. Test and evidence good practice in employment group work and employment mentoring to support refugee integration. This will include creating resources, materials, guidance and a toolkit that can be used by other providers who are interested in delivering 'pre-employment' support to refugees.

## **Evaluation purpose and outcomes**

Working English North addresses a critical unmet need for refugees in the early stages of their integration journey. We want to understand the impact of the Working English North service model for beneficiaries and as a model of best practice for refugee community and supporting organisations. The evaluation will provide us with a critical analysis of the project model, its achievements, impact and learning.

The evaluation must deliver the following outcomes:

1. Increased understanding of how the project model operates, its strengths, challenges, and opportunities for development. This should particularly focus on the balance between group and one-to-one support, and the importance of addressing non-employment barriers to employment progression;
2. Progress towards outcomes specified in our original funding application for the project;
3. Effectiveness of the Outcome Tool approach to measuring 'softer' outcomes as the key building blocks at the start of an employment journey;



4. Production of a good practice ‘toolkit’ focussing on employability group work and mentoring. The toolkit will be a resource that other charities can use to set up similar projects. We expect that it will have three sections: i) a brief overview of the delivery model; ii) ‘top tips’ and learning to maximise effectiveness and avoid pitfalls; and iii) a bank of resources drawn from the project (workshop plans and slides, mentor role descriptions etc). The material for the toolkit will be generated through the wider work of the evaluation, the difference is that it will be written for an external audience. The toolkit will sit on Refugee Action’s ‘Learn’ website.
5. How the project fits within Refugee Action’s theory of change;
6. The impact of the research elements of the project aimed at tackling more systemic barriers to employment progress;
7. Recommendations for embedding the learning within the service model and sharing the model with partners.

**Key deliverables**

The evaluation will be delivered over one and a half years (April 2019 – September 2020). The evaluation must start by 8th April 2019 or shortly afterwards. Key deliverables are listed below. Each deliverable must be delivered within the date ranges specified in brackets. The end date is the latest date for each deliverable and will be specified in the evaluation contract.

No	Outcome	Due Date
1	Develop the project monitoring and evaluation framework, including developing the necessary monitoring tools needed to capture progression and learning e.g. information related to our Outcome Tool.	Initial research April – May 2019; Final framework May – July 2019
2	Initial review of the group work and mentoring service delivery model, written up as a short written report and verbal report.	Initial research April – May 2019; Reports finalised June – Sept 2019
3	Production of “Good practice in employability group work and mentoring” toolkit.	Initial research Oct – Dec 2019 Production January – March 2020
4	Second review of the group work and mentoring service delivery model with short written report and verbal report.	April – May 2020 Reports finalised June-July 2020



5	Updating / finalising of “Good practice in employability group work and mentoring’ toolkit”.	Completed July – Aug 2020
6	A written final evaluation report, no more than 40 double sided A4 pages, including appendices.	September 2020
7	A verbal presentation of the evaluation findings.	September 2020

The evaluator will report to the Head of Asylum Services, Tim Naor Hilton and an internal steering group. They will enable the evaluator to engage with the project and access all necessary documents, beneficiaries and external partners as necessary.

## Evaluator criteria

The successful candidate/s will have:

- A proven track record of producing independent evaluations of services for vulnerable people;
- A detailed understanding of the barriers to integration experienced by refugees in the UK, especially around employment;
- Awareness of approaches to service user empowerment;
- Experience of working with beneficiaries, many of whom are vulnerable adults with limited English language capability;
- Able to meet all timeframe requirements listed above in the ‘Key deliverables’ section;
- Able to work remotely and travel between Greater Manchester and Bradford to engage the service beneficiaries and the project team.

## Budget

The budget for the evaluation is £20,000, inclusive of travel, expenses and VAT. Of this, £10,000 is committed for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April – 30<sup>th</sup> Sept 2019; and £10,000 is committed for year 2 of the project 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019 – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020.



Please include a detailed budget with your proposal linked to the deliverables and your evaluation methodology. Refugee Action will provide travel costs for beneficiaries engaged as part of the evaluation process.

## **Application process**

Applications will be assessed by an internal commissioning panel. The key dates are below. Please submit a written proposal in a word or pdf format no longer than three sides of A4 to Tim Naor Hilton [TimH@refugee-action.org.uk](mailto:TimH@refugee-action.org.uk) detailing:

- Your experience
- Approach to the evaluation
- Detailed delivery plan, including confirmation that key deliverable dates can be met;
- Key risks;
- Budget;
- Two referees.

The deadline for submission of proposals is 5pm Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March.

Interviews will be held in Manchester on 18<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> March (please contact us if you would like to apply but are not able to attend on either of these dates).

The Evaluation Kick Off meeting will be on 2<sup>nd</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> of April (please contact us if you would like to apply but are not able to attend on either of these dates).

If you have any questions or wish to seek clarification on any of the above, please contact Tim Naor Hilton [TimH@refugee-action.org.uk](mailto:TimH@refugee-action.org.uk)