

**Background:**

**Warwickshire has a proud history of welcoming and providing refuge to those fleeing conflict and persecution worldwide.**

The government has established a series of managed migration schemes to enable those that need to seek refuge to be able to do so in a safe and legal way. These schemes are:

- The Hong Kong BNO Visa scheme
- The Homes for Ukraine Scheme/ Ukraine Visa Scheme and Ukraine Family Scheme
- Afghan Resettlement Schemes (ARAP/ACRS)
- UK Resettlement Scheme

**Access to employment:**

Refugees and those on the Migration schemes listed above, have the same protection against discrimination in the workplace as everyone else in the UK. But they can also experience particular problems because there is confusion about their rights and entitlements. Refugees and those on Migration schemes are not part of the points-based system, they are able to work in the UK without any restrictions and, in common with other employees in the UK, are covered by the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

**What can refugees and migrants bring to the workplace?**

Refugees and migrants have a range of valuable skills and experience; resources that can be of great benefit in the workplace. The majority of refugees were working before they arrived in the UK, and have backgrounds in a wide variety of roles, from skilled trades to managers and public sector professions. Research shows that refugees are highly motivated to find employment in the UK and to make a positive contribution at work.

**What is a refugee?**

Refugee status is granted to a person who has had a positive decision on their claim for asylum under the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (the Refugee Convention) and has been granted leave to remain in the UK. Refugees are forced to flee their countries because of a fear of persecution, often as a result of direct state action.

## What documents do I need to see as proof of entitlement to work?

The Home Office issues a Biometric Residence Permit to people when they are granted leave to remain in the UK. An older version of this is the Immigration Status Document. These documents provide evidence of entitlement to work in the UK.




Example of a biometric residence permit and an immigration status document

Examples of Immigration Status Documents (continued)



## Do all refugees have the same entitlement to work?

People may enter Britain legally under a number of schemes; there are slight differences in their entitlement to work.

Scheme	Entitlement to work
<p><b>British Nationals Overseas (BNO)</b> (mostly people from Hong Kong)</p>	<p>BNOs have the right to work as soon as they receive their BNO visa.</p> <p>They may not work as professional sports people or sports coaches - this is the only restriction.</p> <p>For more details, visit <a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6239ea8b8fa8f540f6c2320e/220217_To_Whom_it_may_concern_-_English.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6239ea8b8fa8f540f6c2320e/220217_To_Whom_it_may_concern_-_English.pdf</a></p>  <p>example of a BNO visa stamp</p>

<p><b>UK Resettlement Scheme</b> Open to those fleeing conflict worldwide: (people from Syria, Sudan and Palestine)</p>	<p>Resettled individuals have an immediate right to work. Everyone resettled in the UK is issued with a biometric residence permit (BRP). These can be used to confirm identity, immigration status, and right to work or access to public funds. The card will include the holder's National Insurance number if they are over 16 on the day of arrival.</p>
<p><b>Afghan Resettlement Schemes</b></p>	<p>Those on the ARAP/ACRS schemes have an immediate right to work. Everyone resettled in the UK is issued with a biometric residence permit (BRP). These can be used to confirm identity, immigration status, and right to work or access to public funds. The card will include the holder's National Insurance number if they are over 16 on the day of arrival.</p>
<p><b>Homes for Ukraine</b> (people from Ukraine)</p>	<p>People arriving on this scheme have the right to live and work in the UK for up to three years. They have the same rights and protections in law that UK citizens do. For more details, visit <a href="https://www.gov.uk/offer-work-ukraine">https://www.gov.uk/offer-work-ukraine</a></p> <div data-bbox="512 936 986 1227" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>example of residence permit</p>

### What about Asylum Seekers?

Those who claim asylum in the UK are not normally allowed to work whilst their claim is being considered. However, the Home Office may grant permission to work to asylum seekers whose claim has been outstanding for more than 12 months through no fault of their own. Under this policy, those who are allowed to work are restricted to jobs on the shortage occupation list published by the Home Office. Any permission to work granted will come to an end if their claim is refused and any appeals rights are exhausted because at that point, they are expected to leave the UK. Those who are granted leave (refugee status) have unrestricted access to the labour market. Asylum seekers are encouraged to volunteer whilst their claim is being considered.

## How can an employer help overcome barriers for refugees and those on managed migration schemes?

There are a number of ways an employer can support a refugee in the workplace.

Barrier	How you can help
Knowledge of English language	<p>examples of good practice are –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adjusting interviews so that language is not a barrier, for example, ask for a practical demonstration of the skills that will be used in the position rather than a discussion about them</li> <li>• providing ESOL (English) classes on site</li> <li>• buddying those with lower-level English with those with higher levels</li> <li>• providing information in advance so that people can practice any technical language that may be required</li> </ul>
Transport and travel costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• helping with transport arrangements, eg where the work is shift work, could people travelling from the same locations share transport so shifts can be shared?</li> </ul>
Understanding a new work environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• holding an introductory event at the work site to enable people to understand the expectations, the set up and to ask any questions</li> </ul>
Religious observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• for Muslim workers, providing a prayer room and flexibility around work hours during Ramadan etc is appreciated (this equally applies to those of all faiths)</li> <li>• sending managers on cultural awareness training so that there is increased mutual understanding.</li> </ul>
Qualification not being recognised in the UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• refugees can apply for a 'Statement of Comparability'. The Statement of Comparability compares overseas qualifications to the UK education system, comparing them to UK qualifications and framework levels. There is a charge for this service but the Migration Team at WCC can help with this. For more details, see <a href="https://www.enic.org.uk/Qualifications/SOC/Default.aspx">https://www.enic.org.uk/Qualifications/SOC/Default.aspx</a></li> </ul>

For further information please contact the migration team's employment officer - [karenpayne@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:karenpayne@warwickshire.gov.uk)