

Engaging with ethnic minority communities

This document aims to give advice to employers and frontline staff (e.g. jobcentre advisers/work programme staff) how best to engage with ethnic minorities.

Volunteering

Volunteering greatly improves people's chances of gaining employment by:

- providing experience of the UK workplace
- providing the opportunity to gain references
- allows people to form new contacts and networks
- Improve written and verbal language skills.

English language classes

For some ethnic minority people, not having a good command of both written and spoken English can act as an immediate barrier to finding work:

- Does your area offer English language classes?
- Are these classes free of charge?
- Does the venue where the classes are held provide child care facilities?
- Do you offer single sex classes?
- Are they at a time which is convenient to families?

Advice services

If your area has had or continues to have a high influx of migrants moving in, are there advice services available and well publicised in your area that provide help with education, training and work opportunities?

Advice to employers

Refugees and Asylum Seekers with the right to remain in the UK are allowed to work. Many employers are confused about the rules and regulations around migrant workers.

- [UK Border Agency](#) provides more information


Mentoring

Mentors can be an invaluable source of support, offering:

- advice on volunteering
- assistance with job searches, writing CV's and filling in application forms
- emotional support, acting as role models within communities
- [What can councils do?](#) provides further help and advice

Examples of projects

Voluntary sector

- [City Life Education and Action for Refugees](#)
- [Refugee Resource](#)
- [How one children's centre is leading the way in engaging ethnic minority people](#) (116KB) 

Public sector

- [National Apprenticeship Mentoring Service](#)

Private sector

- [Good Practice Guidelines: Procurement and Employment](#) (354KB) 
- [John Lewis Investing for Future Growth - Pre-employment Training at their Leicester Branch](#) (2.64MB) 

Recruitment agencies

Sue Hill Recruitment (SHR) is an employment agency specialising in library and information staff who work in public, business and commercial libraries and also in academia. The agency has 80 to 100 temporary workers employed on contract each week.

Sue Hill Recruitment worked with the London Borough of Camden to train refugees for library work, the scheme involving taking refugees trained by the Council as library service assistants onto the SHR temporary workers register. Some of these staff were placed in temporary contracts in Camden libraries and subsequently in other public libraries. More recently, some have applied for and been offered permanent roles in public libraries.

SHR has also worked with refugees and asylum seekers who had library, records or archives qualifications or experience before coming to the UK. In

2007 one of these workers won a People's Award in Derbyshire for work he did in an NHS library. Another spent over two years working then gained a permanent role in the academic sector.

SHR staff say they have found working with refugees and asylum seekers extremely gratifying and rewarding.

“It has given another dimension to the work done by the team. The SHR temporary work force is diverse, and working with refugees and asylum seekers has added to that diversity. Additionally it has been extremely good for business. We have seen a very good return on the investment of our time and effort.”

Sue Hill Recruitment would encourage other employers to look carefully at the rich vein of talent, expertise, desire to work and will to succeed of those who have come to the UK through difficult circumstances.