

# EELGA Strategic Migration Partnership Wellbeing and Work for Refugee Integration (WW4RI) FINAL REPORT & GOOD PRACTICES



## Improving the East

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



With generous funding from The Bell Foundation.

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## For more information

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## Project Delivery Partners and core WW4RI team

The East of England Local Government Association (EELGA) covers [50 local authorities](#) across the counties of Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire. This project would not have been possible without the tireless commitment and effort of our project partners who worked throughout the pandemic and beyond to make WW4RI a success. We are grateful to their flexibility which enabled us to work in an agile manner in response to our continuous monitoring of partners' and beneficiaries' experiences, as well as emerging good practices, in order to ensure best results.



Figure 1 - Map of the East of England

Our project delivery partners:

Employability (Essex)	<b>Essex Integration</b>
Employability (Hertfordshire)	<b>Refugee Council</b>
Employability (Norfolk)	<b>Norfolk County Council People from Abroad Team</b>
Employability (Suffolk)	<b>Suffolk Refugee Support</b>
Employability (Bedfordshire)	<b>BRASS (Bedford Refugee and Asylum Seeker Support)</b>
Employability (Peterborough and Cambridgeshire)	<b>PARCA (Peterborough Asylum and Refugee Community Association)</b>
Entrepreneurialism (whole of the East)	<b>MENTA</b>
ESOL (Essex)	<b>Essex Integration</b>
ESOL (Bedfordshire)	<b>Workers Educational Association (WEA) <i>then</i> King's Arms Project</b>
ESOL (Peterborough and Cambridgeshire)	<b>GLADCA</b>
ESOL (Norfolk)	<b>Norfolk County Council Adult Learning <i>then</i> WEA</b>
ESOL (Suffolk)	<b>WEA <i>then</i> West Suffolk College</b>
Exam preparation: IELTS and OET (delivering to the whole of the East, online)	<b>Specialist Language Courses</b>
Wellbeing (Essex, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough)	<b>Refugee Council</b>
Wellbeing (Suffolk)	<b>Health Outreach (NHS Essex University Partnership Trust)</b>

The core project team sat within the East of England Local Government Association Strategic Migration Partnership and consisted of:

**Louise Gooch** – Project Manager

**Gill Searl** – Assistant Project Manager, formerly ESOL specialist lead

**Ferzana Kusair** – High-skills Employment Adviser (role introduced in 2022)

**Karen Lowes** - Finance Officer

**Peter Broomfield** – Training and Compliance Manager (role introduced in 2023)

**Katie Chiu** – Administration Assistant (position previously held by Gemma Field and Fancy Cheron)

## Introduction

The Wellbeing and Work for Refugee Integration project (WW4RI) initially ran from April 2020 to December 2022. Despite launching at the height of the initial COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, the project greatly exceeded all its targets. Owing to these successes, additional funding was granted to continue the project until December 2023.

This final report combines the quantitative data with qualitative feedback provided by partners and beneficiaries themselves, which is a testament to the quality of the project's impact and provides a number of good practices that were developed by all partners and can help other organisations implement a similarly successful project. The WW4RI project team are incredibly grateful for the flexibility of our donors, the UE Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and The Bell Foundation, who recognised that a responsive and effective project for refugees requires flexibility and periodic programmatic review. As such, the project has taken on several new guises to deliver the best results, whilst always being focused on the overall objective of supporting refugees into work and improving their wellbeing and integration through ESOL and therapeutic support.

### Project Rationale

The project was based on the principle that being economically active is the most significant step towards becoming integrated in UK society. Among resettled refugees living for a year in the East of England, as of September 2018, only 4% were in employment, despite high levels of attendance in ESOL (English) classes.

While many refugees show an eagerness to work, unemployment levels remain high, in part because of the barriers they face in accessing a job. Specific challenges include lack of UK work experience, lack of adequate language skills, lack of knowledge of workplace culture to find, apply and interview for a job, challenges in recognising or translating their skills, qualifications and experience, or justifying gaps in CVs caused by the lack of right to work during the asylum process.

Employers often lack awareness and knowledge about the hiring of refugees, including a limited understanding of qualifications and permission to work. Educating employers and bridging the gap between the refugee community and the corporate world is necessary to overcome these barriers to refugee employment.

Additionally, refugees may have previous experiences of trauma due to various factors such as persecution in their home countries, challenges encountered on their journey and culture shock. This includes trauma, heightened sensitivity, lack of trust in others, irritability, stress, depression and anxiety as well as other mental health concerns such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). While their situation had improved in terms of personal safety by resettling in the UK, their past experiences often get in the way of living full lives. These challenges, if left untended, can impede people's ability to learn a new language and approach the workplace due to lack of focus and concentration, poor-timekeeping, decreased ability to retain information and, in some cases, particular current events or situations can invoke flashbacks or painful memories.

These observations are based on the significant experience of practitioners across the UK and academia, notably Ager and Strang's [Indicators of Integration: Final Report \(2004\)](#) and the [Home Office Indicators of Integration Framework \(2019\)](#). The latter publication includes an updated framework of integration which recognises that the combination of factors lead to people's successful integration.

Thus, the project Wellbeing and Work for Refugee Integration (WW4RI) adopted three inter-related strands: employability support, ESOL and skills training, and wellbeing and health. Employability support also encompassed self-employment and entrepreneurship.



Figure 2 - Home Office Indicators of Integration Framework (2019)

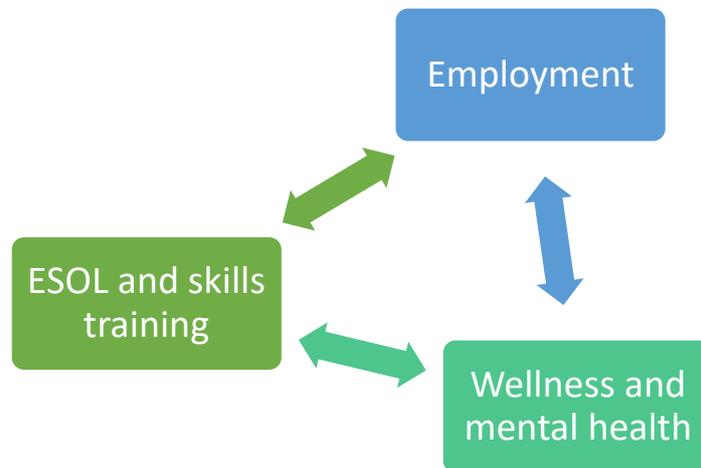


Figure 3 - Project streams

For more detailed background to the project see the *Framework for Refugee Resettlement* which was developed by the project team and informed the project’s design.



Framework for refugee resettlement .

To inform the extension of the project, an independent evaluation was commissioned, funded by The Bell Foundation; its recommendations were adopted and good practices were continued. The external evaluation is available [here](#).

### Overview of Final Results

Overall, the project reached 1796 unique beneficiaries (extension target 1164). In the original iteration of the project 1322 unique beneficiaries were reached, meeting and exceeding the targets for each objective as shown below. (N.B. The total figure exceeds 1322 as beneficiaries accessed multiple services.)

*Table 1 – Project overview*

Delivery Objective	Target	Completed by 31 December 2023	Percentage achievement	Completed by 30 September 2023
Employment assessments and action plans completed	590	958	162.4%	301
Refugees access the well-being service	280	284	101.4%	90
Refugees register for an ESOL and skills course	405	621	153.3%	32

The project achieved an excellent gender balance with 924 female beneficiaries and 872 male beneficiaries.

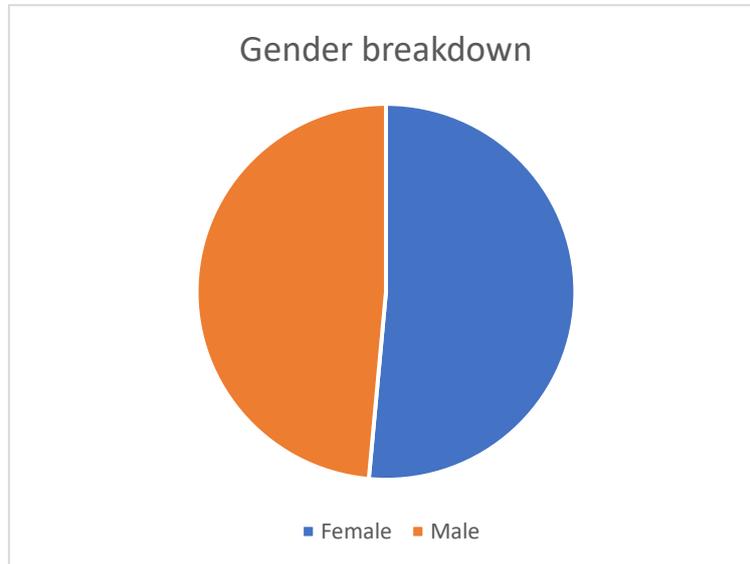


Figure 4 - Gender balance

The project supported a wide range of age brackets.

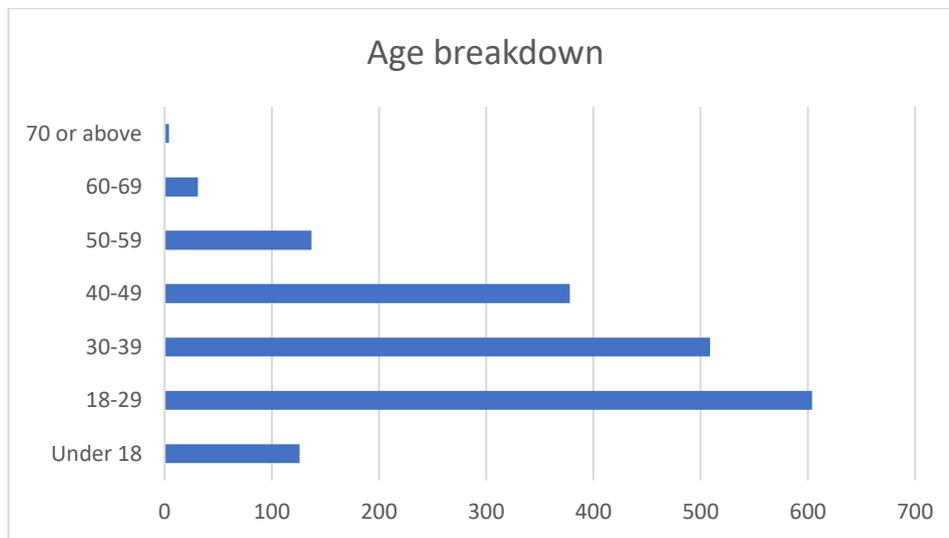


Figure 5 - Age of beneficiaries

In addition, by the end the project demonstrated its ability to include all nationalities that presented with employability needs, in particular responding to the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan and the development of new resettlement pathways for Afghans; and the conflict in Ukraine and its specific protection programmes.

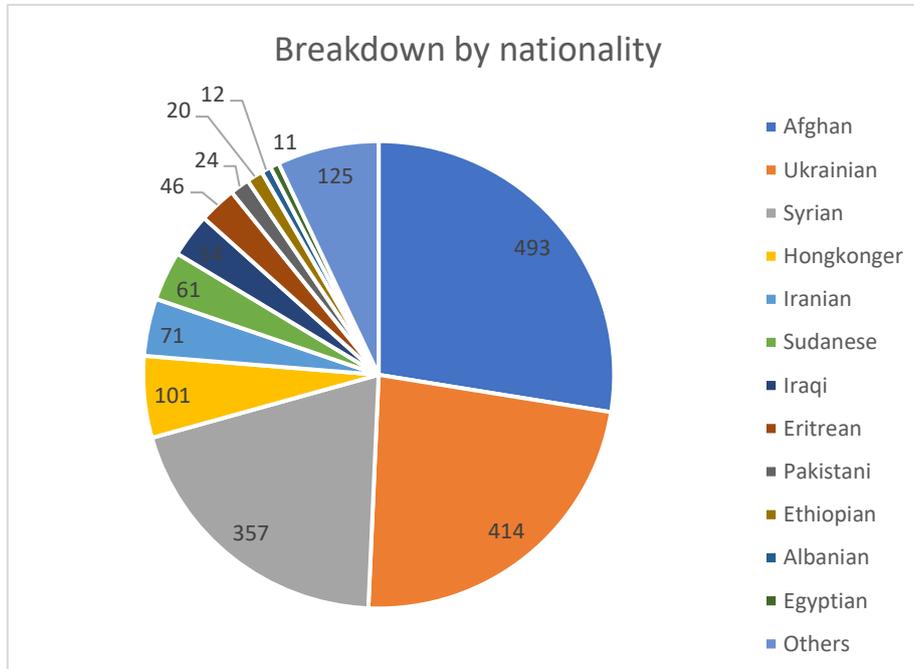


Figure 6 - Countries of origin

## Beneficiary Survey

The WW4RI project team regarded gathering the voices of beneficiaries as fundamental to understanding what worked well, what was not working well and what improvements should be made. The report is interspersed with quotes from beneficiaries that received employment support, ESOL and skills classes and wellbeing support.

In addition, the WW4RI project team conducted a separate evaluation of beneficiaries’ perceptions of the support they received and the impact it had on achieving their holistic integration goals, including employment. The methodology of the evaluation was developed with the support of a monitoring and evaluation consultant, ERS, identified and funded by The Bell Foundation.

The online questionnaire was distributed to partners to cascade to beneficiaries. The sample size was 54. On average there were nine respondents from each county, with Essex being the most responsive with 17 and Hertfordshire being the least responsive with one. Whilst the fact that the respondents were self-selecting according to their desire to share feedback whilst balancing competing priorities, and clients who had “graduated” from the project were not approached to see how they had progressed, it is hoped that the evaluation nevertheless captured a snapshot of opinions from the project.

Key findings are highlighted below and throughout. As can be seen improving language skills and finding a new or better job rank highly amongst beneficiaries’ priorities. Overall, responses from the beneficiary evaluation point to a high level of satisfaction with the support the project delivered.

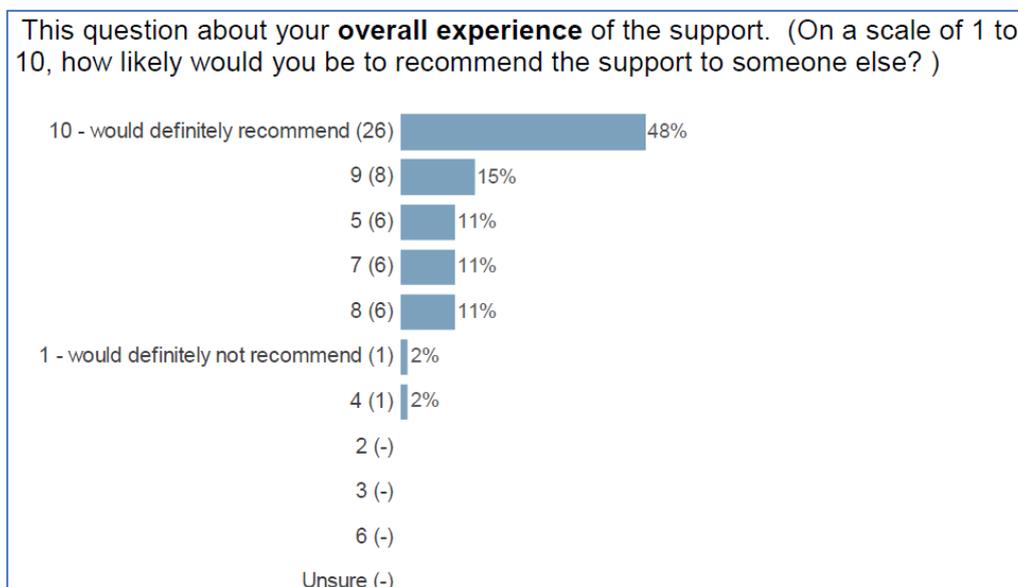


Figure 7 - Beneficiary feedback

Think back to before you started receiving the support: what did you want help with? *You can select more than one option.*

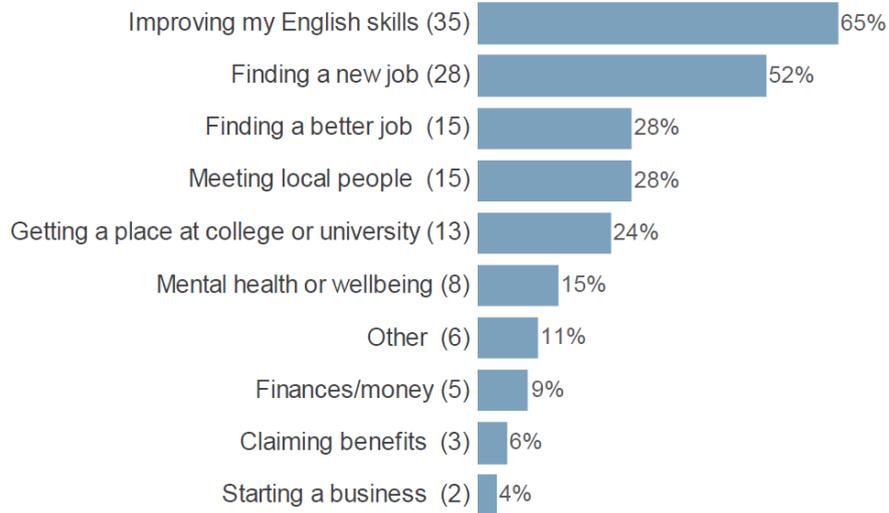


Figure 8 - Beneficiary feedback

## Employment Support

Eight employment advisers (6 full-time equivalents, being one adviser per county, but two in Essex for the final year) were the first point of contact for the majority of beneficiaries. In 2022 new entry points were created so that beneficiaries could enter ESOL courses directly, recognising that they were furthest from the labour market. Employment advisers enrolled beneficiaries onto the project, recorded details of the beneficiary’s previous training, employment and English level. Employment advisers developed individual action plans, then referred clients to ESOL and skills training and/or well-being services as appropriate.

Key employment support statistics include:

- 166 have confirmed with their employment adviser that they have entered employment.
- 175 individuals had their qualifications processed for equivalency in the UK through the UK ENIC service.
- 202 confirmed that they had entered employment or self-employment by the end of the project with the others continuing to work on their skills and language.

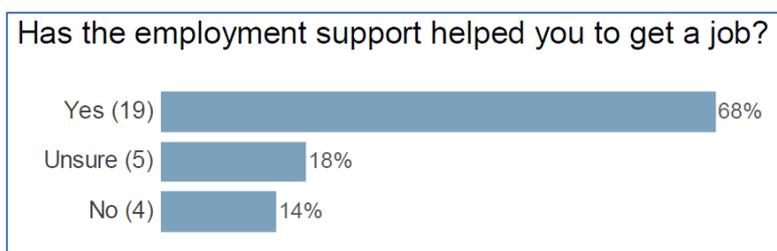


Figure 9 - Beneficiary feedback



Figure 10 - Beneficiary feedback

Employment advisers provided ongoing mentoring and guidance at all stages of the job search and application process. This included advice on writing CVs, cover letters and searching for suitable jobs online. If beneficiaries’ applications were successful, employment advisers provided guidance on interview techniques. An important element of all employment advisers’ approach was the recognition of beneficiaries’ previous employment: beneficiaries were given the opportunity to reflect on this and identify transferrable skills, then formulate statements for job applications and interviews using the STAR (situation, task, action result) scaffolding. Whilst competency style questioning in interviews was unfamiliar to a vast majority of learners, training made it more accessible.

Employment advisers generally worked with clients on a one-to-one basis, but in some cases CV writing sessions were delivered to groups. In Norfolk, the employment adviser began providing one-to-one support, before developing a CV template in a UK format, with a full example, that was

emailed to clients; the clients wrote their CV to the best of their ability and sent it back to the employment adviser for review. This approach sought to promote clients' independence.

Placements at schools or other places such as Waitrose, East of England Co-op and IKEA allowed beneficiaries to interact with employers and know firsthand about the work environment in UK. Employment advisers were required to use their initiative and explore local opportunities for their clients. A successful partnership in Peterborough with the Refugee Council and IKEA provided an online employability course for refugees that went on to give refugees a work placement in IKEA upon completion. We had over 15 people complete this course and six were offered employment in IKEA, four of them are still working there now; one has been working there for over two years and has progressed to become a new employee trainer. In Bedfordshire and Peterborough, the childcare course was the most popular amongst beneficiaries and this success translated into people taking up work placements at nearby schools. This was beneficial in that many of these placements were followed by paid employment for these beneficiaries – through partnerships established by the employment advisers with local schools. The employment adviser in Norfolk secured a partnership with the East of England Co-op through which they would offer work placements and a guaranteed interview. Based on this success, the WW4RI project team was able to secure similar agreements with the East of England Co-op in Suffolk and Essex.

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*[The client] is doing amazingly well. We've had all our staff saying they would love to keep her. She isn't afraid to ask questions and has picked up her daily tasks very quickly. Her customer values fit in very well with our store and Co-op. She has a good understanding of general stock rotation and making the store look tidy and clean, she tells me it's because she spends so much time shopping."*

East of England Co-op Store Team Manager, referencing a client who completed a work placement.

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## Skills recognition

Employment advisers supported clients to have their qualifications benchmarked against UK equivalents through the UK ENIC service, which is the UK national agency for international qualifications and skills. The bundles of codes that were funded by the project benefitted **175** clients who received certifications of comparability for their qualifications gained outside the UK. This particularly benefitted graduates and those with training and experience in the medical sector and ensured that people entered the professions that they had experience in. This approach was an important element of the WW4RI project because experience has shown that simply getting refugees into any job usually results in them receiving low pay which diminishes refugees' hopes in the long-term.

Accessing UK ENIC's services can be challenging to those not familiar with the process, and to overcome this a guidance document was developed and shared with employment advisers, and the WW4RI project team established a single point of contact at UK ENIC who managed all requests.

## High-skills employment adviser

The high skills employment adviser, part of the core WW4RI project team, was a role which was developed as the project evolved. She engaged employers in the region to help them understand the unique needs of refugees and the positive contribution refugees make to the workplace. In particular, this involved employer engagement and providing training through her programme of 'Let's Employ Refugees'. This training was attended by more than 45 individual employers from multiple sectors including care providers, councils, museums, arts, fire and rescue, schools, manufacturing and food processing.

In addition to those employers, the high skills employment adviser worked closely with over 40 NHS staff from across all of the region's NHS Trusts in multiple departments and specialisms. As a result of this engagement, **21 refugee medical professionals are now at various stages of the recruitment pathway**, with many others being referred to complete their journeys after the project.

In recognition of the considerable activity undertaken with the NHS, in October 2023 the high-skills employment adviser, in partnership with Anglia Ruskin University, organised an event to support refugees into medical careers. It was attended by a variety of professionals from the NHS, councils, and the voluntary sector. The event was supported by presentations from key allies who are determined to improve refugee pathways into the medical sector: the Head of School of Medicine, Anglia Ruskin University, Assistant Director of Medical Workforce; East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust (ESNEFT); Managing Director of Specialist Language Courses (delivering OET exam preparation courses for doctors); and renowned Dr Stephen Nickless who is dedicated to providing professional development support to refugee doctors. Importantly, attendees heard personal stories from an orthopaedic surgeon from Afghanistan and a doctor from Syria, who spoke passionately about the difficulties they and other medics have faced.

As a result of the event, many next steps were identified which the high skills employment adviser will work on after the WW4RI project:

- Coordinate a professional advisory group of NHS professionals to guide on clinical roles, opportunities, training towards developing into practice and how to overcome any obstacles that may get in the way of refugees.
- Connect refugee doctors with other doctors to share practice and support, co-ordinate and link in advice and updates on opportunities.
- The project's PR partners lined up interviews for the refugee beneficiaries with Greatest Hits Radio and British Medical Association's 'The Doctor' magazine.
- Continue to explore further opportunities with colleges offering support to doctors on how to encourage greater flexibility and increased support for refugees.
- Explore other opportunities with physician associates and paramedics.
- Connect with St John's Ambulance to provide paid and volunteer opportunities as an interim opportunity.
- Connect with the GMC for advice as and when needed on an ad hoc basis.
- ESNEFT will continue to provide free clinical attachments and advocate other trusts to adopt a similar offer.
- Advocate for funding to continue to support the Medical Support Worker role that was developed during the pandemic and which has been transformative in providing meaningful paid work to overseas qualified doctors.

- Hertfordshire and West Essex will continue to support NHS managers to recruit; further training to be offered to employment advisers on navigating the NHS job search process, including writing applications and CVs as well as understanding what the NHS is looking for.
- Continue to build a wider network of NHS contacts in the East.
- Dentistry is another area that is being explored further; the high skilled employment adviser has connected with NHS England who are keen to address the shortage of dentists in the region.

Another initiative of the high skills employment adviser were the **Let's Employ Refugees** employment events. Four of these events were held in total, three in person and one online. In each event, Farsh Raoufi MBE, a retired firefighter who arrived in the UK as a refugee, provided a thought-provoking presentation about his experience finding employment in the UK. The in-person Let's Employ Refugees event in Norfolk in 2023 was combined with a jobs fair which encouraged greater interactions between employers, refugees and support services.

**Let's Employ Refugees  
AGENDA**

- Introduction.
- Hearing a refugee's experience.
- Overview of the common obstacles refugees face entering employment.
- Breakout groups to discuss how employers can better support refugees.
- Plenary feedback.

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*It was important to hear Farsh sharing his personal narrative and connect that to the second session of the event. It was also important that we had the breakout rooms to be able to discuss further.*

A Let's Employ Refugees attendee

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#### Lessons Learned and good practices

- Employment advisers noted that many women in particular, but men too, were often not able to take up employment straightaway due to childcare and family commitments. Nevertheless, employment advisers continued to provide CV support and mentoring in searching and applying for jobs so that they had the skills for the future. The short-term project duration meant that not all beneficiaries will enter work immediately, therefore the project team opted to ensure that success was measured by the number of people getting *nearer* to employment, not necessarily *entering* employment.

- The Know Your Employment Rights skills course was offered from January 2023 and was in-person for lower-level learners. One employability provider said this course was useful: unfortunately, this was not offered from the start of the project, it was not available online, and it was not for our higher-level learners. Whilst ESOL and skills providers and employment advisers sought to inform clients about their employment rights, a dedicated forum to discuss this is an important element of an employability programme for refugees and other migrants. Additionally, the Refugee Council developed information materials in multiple languages that were distributed in print and digitally.
- When delivering sector specific ESOL and skills courses, a lesson learned was the importance of the employment adviser linking up with industries to advocate for refugees and arrange work placements. This helped consolidate learning and would improve the effectiveness, and relevance, of the courses. This included taking beneficiaries on site visits to various employers such as food preparation factories. One employment adviser also suggested convening meetings between potential employers and refugees so that expectations of working conditions and requirements are understood.
- The project team learned the importance of involving employers not just at the point of recruitment, but in assisting skills and employability training. One promising practice was in Peterborough: the employment adviser invited an infrastructure company to conduct mock interviews with 25 beneficiaries. Each beneficiary was then given a sheet to take home giving them hints and tips of what they can do to improve in their next interviews and importantly to home in on what they had excelled in on the interview. Representatives from the company remarked on the strong ability of candidates; while beneficiaries found the event very useful practice, particularly when answering competency-based questions. Similar interview sessions were held across the region.
- Local employers often had limited recognition of foreign qualifications and experience. For many industries (i.e. mid- to high-level), using the services of UK ENIC can overcome this. However, for other sectors with less specific entry requirements, engaging employers early, facilitating work placements and advising employers about the obstacles refugees face and how to provide inclusive recruitment processes proved most beneficial.
- There is value in providing mentoring opportunities. Two of the project team undertook training with Breaking Barriers, who link refugees up with professionals in their sector of choice. Unfortunately the project team were not able to implement this fully due to timescales. Future projects might consider embedding this from the outset. At a local level, the employment adviser in Hertfordshire linked experienced refugees with newcomers which enabled the sharing of guidance and support.
- Common issues found when providing CV support included having too many pages, not being concise enough, and including photographs as well as other unnecessary information such as gender, marital status, family status etc. Reference to the Equality Act 2010 during meetings highlights protected characteristics that cannot be discriminated against in employment, but also generally in life in the UK.
- After the Let's Employ Refugees events, potential extensions, as suggested in post-event feedback, would be to ask organisations to create a "collective agreement" that they intend to implement.

- Many employers still find employing refugees uncharted territory, so furnishing them with ample guidance and toolkits is essential. We shared this good practice toolkit created by a sister project on numerous occasions: [The time is now: How to bridge the gap between refugees and employers | Migration Yorkshire](#)
- Of those that responded to the beneficiary evaluation, the majority of jobs were part-time (74%) and permanent (63%). Understandably beneficiaries have obligations to childcare and learning English, however it is key to ensure that future projects achieve full gainful employment for those that are able to do so.
- A Refugee Support Fair that was held in Norwich was a successful initiative that brought together support services. It attracted around 500 refugees and community members and had 34 stalls split into four sections: employment, with major regional employers and recruitment agencies; education, with local colleges and learning providers; wellbeing and support, with Norfolk MIND and British Red Cross amongst others; and the business start-up section, organised by MENTA and featuring new businesses established by refugees.

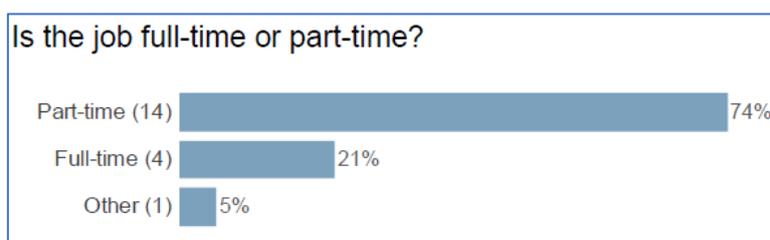


Figure 11 - Beneficiary feedback

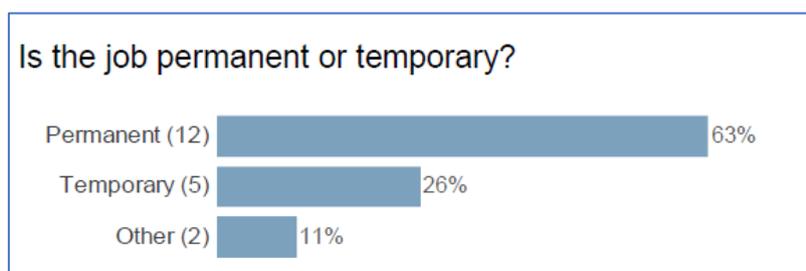


Figure 12 - Beneficiary feedback

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*The partnerships in Peterborough will have left long lasting legacies and have shaped the refugee landscape for the better improving other organisations and making them focus on refugees through the outreach we have done on the WW4RI project. Colleges and schools in Peterborough have been made increasingly aware of their refugee students and the different needs that they and their families might have in connection with educational institutions. Local businesses have been made aware of the employment difficulties that refugees face and the additional needs there within that they need to secure employment, this has been done by outreach, partnership and advertising in the local newspapers.*

PARCA Employment Adviser

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*A lot of our clients had family commitments and they were not in a position to apply for a job straightaway. They however told us that they had gained valuable skills that would help them get employment in the future. We assisted clients with creating and updating their CVs. On a lot of occasions, we needed to explain about the purpose of a CV in the UK and the need to keep it relevant without lengthy paragraphs. Some of our clients were not aware of the practice of seeking referees and some found it difficult to find suitable people for this, especially if they had not worked before.*

BRASS Employment Adviser

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## Employment support case studies

### *Nursery Assistant*

At the start of WW4RI, S was enrolled onto the project requesting English support. She was really hardworking and entered an advanced course that would give her new skills for employment. She successfully completed the Introduction to Childcare course which enabled her to take on a work placement at a school.

Following this, she joined Job Search Skills and Driving Theory courses. During this time, she was also doing a voluntary job with Essex Free School Uniform. In Sep 2022 S started her school placement which lasted for a few months. She received support from her employment advisor to finalise her CV and apply for jobs online as a supply teacher or nursery assistant. S was offered a job as a nursery assistant at a local school in Colchester and has started working since.

### *Self-employed plumber*

Z completed two ESOL and skills courses with Essex Integration, showing great commitment and progress. Then he was supported to write his CV and write job applications. Z found a job at Wickes while he undertook, and completed, a plumbing course. The employment advisers supported him to update his CV accordingly which led to him being a contractor then self-employed.

### *A's story*

Upon his arrival, A had limited proficiency in English, which posed obstacles in effective communication and finding employment opportunities. Additional challenges were living in a remote and rural area with few transport links nor job opportunities. A secured a position as a kitchen assistant in a local restaurant, marking a pivotal moment in his life. His job required daily English communication, which significantly improved his language skills and boosted his confidence in social interactions. His dedication and hard work in the kitchen led to promotions and increased responsibilities, enhancing his self-esteem. Through interactions with colleagues and customers, A gained a broader understanding of British culture, formed new friendships, and

integrated into his new community. With a steady income from his job, A's financial situation began to improve, alleviating much of the stress he had experienced upon arrival. Encouraged by his progress, A enrolled in evening classes to further enhance his English proficiency and acquire additional skills. He also became an active member of a local refugee support group, where he shared his experiences and offered guidance to newcomers. A's transformation from a vulnerable refugee to a confident, financially stable individual highlights the resilience and determination exhibited by many refugees when given opportunities and support. His journey underscores the crucial role played by community organizations, language education, and employment opportunities in assisting refugees as they rebuild their lives and make positive contributions to their adopted countries.

*Assistant Site-manager*

One beneficiary was promoted to a senior labourer position and now manages a team of labourers. His company is considering him for a site-manager role, and he is already taking on some responsibilities as an assistant site-manager. The AMIF CSCS course played a vital role in his career advancement, leading to a significant pay raise. He has also been able to rent a house for his family, which he is currently refurbishing. This support has been truly life-changing for him.

## Business Start-ups

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*“I really appreciated the support that I got from my MENTA Adviser, and the trainers at MENTA - particularly with business planning and tax questions. It really opened my mind to the need for a business plan and how to structure a business.”*

### A client in Suffolk

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Business start-up advice was provided by MENTA, whose support within the provisions of the WW4RI programme helped clients explore the option of self-employment and/or, make plans and prepare to start a business. This was provided largely through the provision of 1-1 advice, support & research assistance via the Cobra cobweb system, which is a national repository that enables users to “to explore business sectors, find business support and trade legally” whilst also providing “Start-up guides and ideas Business support in your area Market and sector guides Business rules and regulations.”<sup>1</sup> During the lifespan of the programme 137 clients had the opportunity to discuss their business idea(s), examine feasibility of plans and learn about the steps they need to take. Assistance and guidance was provided to help with writing and developing business plan documents and preparing financial forecasts.

Clients also had the option to attend topic-specific training sessions with facilitators on ‘Business Planning’ and ‘Marketing & Social Media’. During the course of the programme, MENTA ran five sessions on each topic with 42 clients attending Business Planning and 23 attending a Marketing & Social Media session. However, clients could also discuss these topics one-to-one: from an early stage MENTA understood that for many clients individual support would be more effective and were able to ‘pivot’ the support to meet clients’ needs.

Key business start-up statistics include:

- 36 clients (26.3% of a total of 137 who were referred to MENTA) started a business or self-employment activities and/or had support for an existing business.
- 14 clients received start-up seed funding.

In line with best practice, the advice and support given to clients was impartial so that they could make their own decisions about whether and how to proceed. MENTA’s ethos was to help clients ‘start well’ and their work with clients gave them the knowledge and understanding of options and actions involved in setting up a business or going self-employed. This was done to create an awareness of the stages involved and the challenges in order that they could make informed decisions for themselves. However, MENTA also needed to help clients understand if their business idea was not viable, or self-employment was not the right thing for them and therefore, finding suitable employment would be the correct outcome. Clients rarely want to hear this advice, or they decide not to engage with MENTA as a result and ‘go it alone’, however, unless business plans and self-employment are well thought out, it can lead to an unsuccessful outcome. This may result in clients going down a different path with another or adapted business idea; the realisation that the

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<sup>1</sup> [Cobweb COBRA \(cobwebinfo.com\)](http://cobwebinfo.com)

path they wanted to follow is not viable was an essential aspect of promoting clients' self-determination and critical thinking.

Where clients were looking to plan for start-up costs, impartial information was provided regarding their options. The adviser also worked with them if they wished to apply for one of the seed funding grants that MENTA had available. In preparing them for life as an entrepreneur in the UK this process required a completed business plan and financials as part of the application process so that they evidenced preparations for a viable business idea to the panel considering the application and have this in readiness for their futures.

The MENTA adviser found that the work they provided was complementary to the ESOL and skills training, and clients' communication skills and language fluency noticeably improved. This helped them to better understand and express themselves when speaking about their ideas and plans for self-employment. They were able to apply existing and new skills to their business plans and client confidence also developed.

The project had a budget to provide seed-funding to refugee start-ups. Requests for grants were developed with the business adviser and reviewed by a panel comprising MENTA, EELGA and an employment adviser from a different county to the client to avoid a conflict of interest. **14 clients** completed the application process and were successful in receiving approval for seed funding. Amounts approved varied from £205.92 to £1554.00, totalling £13,012.31 overall spread between the clients. Seed funding use ranged from purchasing of tools, development of websites to financing of exams as shown below.

- Badminton Academy – funding for sports equipment
- Painter & Decorator – funding for tools & equipment
- Egyptian Street Food – funding for grill & catering equipment
- Arabic Language tuition & interpreting – funding for website, IT equipment & software
- Hairdresser & make-up artist – funding for equipment
- Electrician - funding for tools
- Interpreting – funding for DPSI examination fees
- HGV driver – funding towards training & exams
- Handcrafted items – funding for materials, marketing & website
- Ballet school – funding for ballet barres & other equipment
- Zumba teacher - funding for equipment
- Ukrainian art – funding for IT device, software & materials
- Taxi Hire – funding for tests & licences to be able to be a taxi driver
- Architectural drawing - website and marketing materials

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*“MENTA have helped me to create a business plan and financial forecast, as well as offering funding to buy ballet barres and other equipment. Without this support, it would have been much harder to grow the business as I have.”*

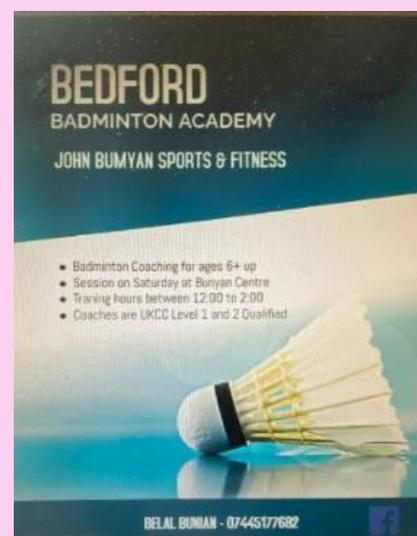
A client in Norfolk

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## Results

MENTA and the WW4RI project team are pleased to share details of the successful business start-ups, below.

- HM (Essex) – Private hire taxi driver
- OV (Suffolk) – photographer  
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CWtHQixtWQN/?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=>  
[Фотограф Владимирова Ольга](#) | [Facebook](#)
- MD (Suffolk) – Bespoke furniture design  
<https://dvorsky.co.uk/>
- AS (Norfolk) – Zumba teacher  
<https://www.zumba.com/en-US/p/alona-shakhaieva/2167882>
- AS (Essex) – electrician and handyman trading as Salama Electric
- VP and KK (Suffolk) – Antares PMU Ltd (Permanent Make-up Studio)  
<https://antares.makeup/>
- BB (Bedfordshire) – Badminton Academy
- IM (Essex) – Painter & Decorator
- SEN (Norfolk) – Egyptian Street Food  
<https://www.facebook.com/ramsesstreetfood/>  
 and  
<https://www.instagram.com/ramsesstreetfood/>
- OA (Norfolk) – Marketing & Social Consultancy Business  
<https://www.oamarketing.co.uk/>
- TG (Peterborough & Cambridgeshire) – Barbering business
- R (Suffolk) – Bridgeway to Arabic Language  
<https://bridgewaytoarabiclanguage.com/>



- TZ (Suffolk) - Polli Gnomka  
<https://www.facebook.com/gnomka.polli>
- OS (Suffolk)  
<https://m.facebook.com/people/Oleksandra-Shevchenko-Ukrainian-Artist/100063633727588/>
- AH and AH (Peterborough & Cambridgeshire) – Stars Food  
<https://www.facebook.com/people/Stars-Food/100063839183333/?ti=as>
- AZ (Norfolk) – Dance teacher



The following are existing clients of MENTA who then started new businesses or self-employment during WW4RI.

- MAH (Norfolk) – Was helped to start a self-employed delivery business on a Centre for Excellence (CFE) refugee entrepreneurship pilot and progressed onto WW4RI for continued support and has since started as a self-employed taxi driver in the Norwich area
- SAH (Norfolk) – Came to MENTA for support with pre-existing butchers counter business but then stopped trading and has begun as a self-employed taxi driver in Norfolk

The following clients received advice regarding pre-existing businesses.

- SA and HAB (Norfolk) – Food business started whilst on CFE pilot for which we provided further support under WW4RI as well as advice regarding other plans
- BA (Peterborough & Cambridgeshire) – Tiling business started on CFE pilot programme for which we provided further support under WW4RI  
(<https://www.facebook.com/zrtilingservices/>)
- AA (Essex) – Butcher's shop (<https://www.facebook.com/people/The-Castle-Butchery/100057332865273/>)
- AK (Norfolk) – Self-employed tattooist started on CFE programme for which further opportunity for support was provided under WW4RI.
- MMS (Essex) – Restaurant (<https://falafel-and-more.business.site/>)
- AB (Beds) – Self-employed Barber who was considering own shop
- NI (Beds) – Self-employed community interpreter
- MI (Suffolk) – Lingerie business (<https://www.anqacollective.org/all-entrepreneurs/maria-igwebuike-2/>)

- BA (Norfolk) – Silk importation business started as operational during CFE pilot participation. Client then progressed onto WW4RI for continued support and has remained with us due to hiatus with business and consideration of other plans.
- AI (Beds) – Online trading business
- AC (Suffolk) – Travel business in Ukraine that client is setting up also in the UK

Additional clients left the project's support and went on to establish their own business, gain employment elsewhere or transfer to other programmes. Towards the end of the project a further 10 clients advised that they intended to enter self-employment or start a business beyond the project.

#### Lessons Learned and Good Practices

- It was important for the business start-up adviser to attend weekly meetings with employment advisers. This streamlined the referral process and, if a business start-up was not viable, ensured that clients could be supported into employment without a gap in provision.
- Working with MENTA on the Centre for Excellence refugee entrepreneurship pilot programme prior to WW4RI starting identified the need to provide refugees with seed funding support. Thus, ample budget was allocated during project development for seed funding grants.
- The economic situation in the UK meant that there were clients who had to balance their need to earn a living and the demands of their current employment against the desire to start a business for themselves and the time needed to focus and work on their project. There were also some who simply discovered that they weren't ready to start the business yet, or who had personal / health issues that, despite their determination, have acted as barriers for the present. Despite the ambition that the refugees clearly demonstrated, it is crucial in some cases to factor in additional time and support as well as more seed funding.
- For those who have established businesses, support is still beneficial as they look to secure and develop the business further through its early stages.
- Care must be taken when providing business start-up support due to the potential financial risks that it could entail. This is where solid start-up support from MENTA was invaluable. In one county, a client proceeded to open a food stand at a local market independently, without MENTA's support. Unfortunately, it had to be shuttered after a few months due to insufficient profitability. Consequently, the client found themselves in debt and obligated to repay funds borrowed from a bank to initiate the business.

Business start-up case studies

*Electrician*

AS joined WW4RI having had a successful career as an electrician in Syria and other parts of the Middle East. He found that his electrical qualifications were not recognised in the UK, so he dedicated himself to re-train, with work experience provided via a contact at his local authority. Once he had passed his exams, AS approached MENTA for Business Start-Up support. It was clear from an early stage that seed funding would help him to buy specific electrical tools, such as testers and enable him to start working for himself, so his MENTA Adviser helped him to complete a business plan and financial forecast and the application was successful. However, the story didn't end there. AS found that he was unable to carry out electrical installation work in customers' homes, despite his qualifications, as he needed a 'competent person' certificate. This has proved hard to obtain, but AS decided to stay positive and started work as a handyman under the company name Salama Electric. He also joined 'Trust a Trader' and has found that – despite the fees – they are providing him with an increasing flow of work. He is still searching for his elusive qualification and hopes that a local company will hear about his standard of work and offer to help him achieve his goal.

*Handicrafts*

Already the owner of a successful crocheting business in Ukraine, T was seeking to bring her products to a new audience in the UK. Referred to MENTA by Suffolk Refugee Support in Ipswich, T was supported to complete a business plan, financials and a seed funding application to create a website, buy more accessories for her clothing range and purchase leaflets and visit cards. T is an extremely driven person and has high standards, shown by the quality of her hats, bags, scarves and gloves and we have no doubt that she will succeed in making her business her primary source of income, and employ more staff, in the near future.

*Ballet school*

Prior to being referred to MENTA, AZ was already an extremely capable entrepreneur. She had been trained to a high standard as a ballerina in Ukraine and successfully run a ballet school there. She hoped to be able to transfer her rather unique skills to the Norwich area, where there was clearly a need for this level of ballet tuition. AZ had already been working on a business plan and financials with the help of her host so MENTA's adviser helped to develop and fine tune them for a seed funding application. The panel was unanimous in its support and AZ received her much-needed ballet barres – which have been put to great use since. She started off at Copperdot Studios in Norwich with invaluable support from the owner, Rachel, and has continued to expand the business, gaining more venues and students from word-of-mouth referrals and promotional videos. AZ and [her business partner] have a goal to make Norwich the centre of ballet in the UK outside of London and they are well on their way!

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*Through working on this this project, I have been delighted to meet some very impressive people. Many of them have had senior roles in their own countries and need a little help to be able to start again here. I am glad to have met people who have shown me that the way in which refugees are portrayed in the media is wide of the mark. The people I have met want to work, contribute and live peaceful lives in our communities.*

MENTA Adviser

*Through this project, I have met people who have shared their stories of leaving their lives, and family members, dead and alive, in short order and in terrible circumstances. As we have worked together on their plans for a business in the UK, they have shared their tears, their frustrations and their ambition for the future. It has been a privilege. Wherever I work next, I will make sure that refugee entrepreneurs remain a focus of activity.*

MENTA Refugee Business Adviser

*This project has inspired me to return to study, and the subject of my masters is refugee-related. I have loved being a part of this project.*

MENTA Administrator

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## ESOL and skills training

The project initially set a target of 465 individuals who would access ESOL and skills training to bring them closer to the job market. By the end of the project the **total figure was 766**.

Some other key facts and figures:

- 417 out of 766 learners (54%) enrolled on the Driving Theory Course, making it the most popular course;
- 93 individuals attended the IELTS exam preparation course;
- 11 individuals with medical backgrounds attended the OET exam preparation course;
- 43 received mobile ESOL in their homes, overcoming transport and childcare challenges.
- 103 attended summer school classes.

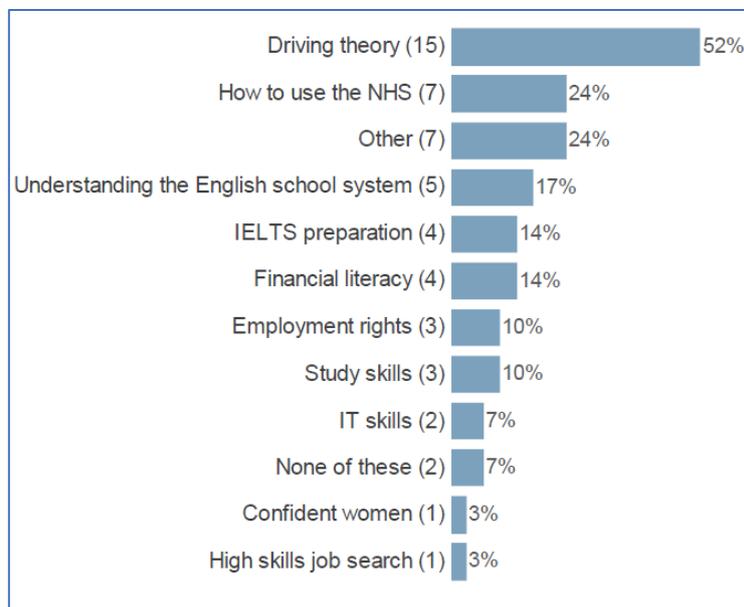


Figure 13 - Beneficiary feedback on what course they sought

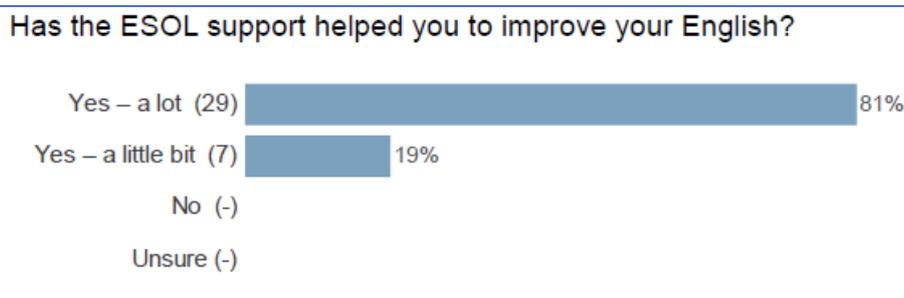


Figure 14 - Beneficiary feedback

Has the ESOL support helped you to get a job?

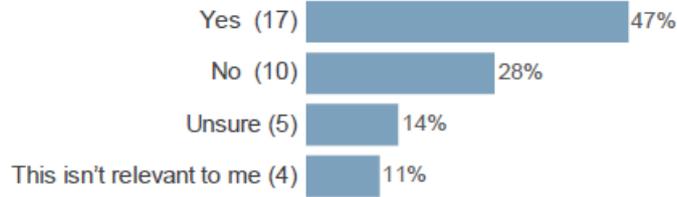


Figure 15 - Beneficiary feedback

Has the ESOL support helped you look for a place at college or university?

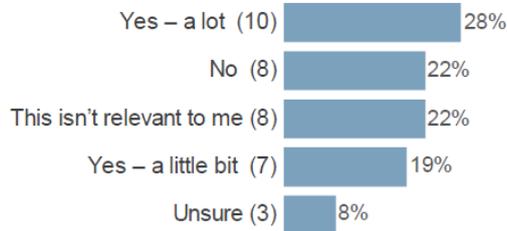


Figure 16 - Beneficiary feedback

(How would you rate your English language skills BEFORE you received the ESOL support?)

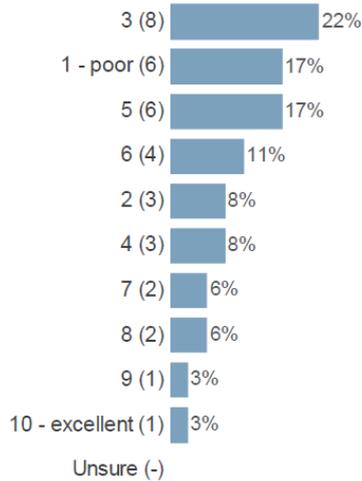


Figure 17 - Beneficiary feedback

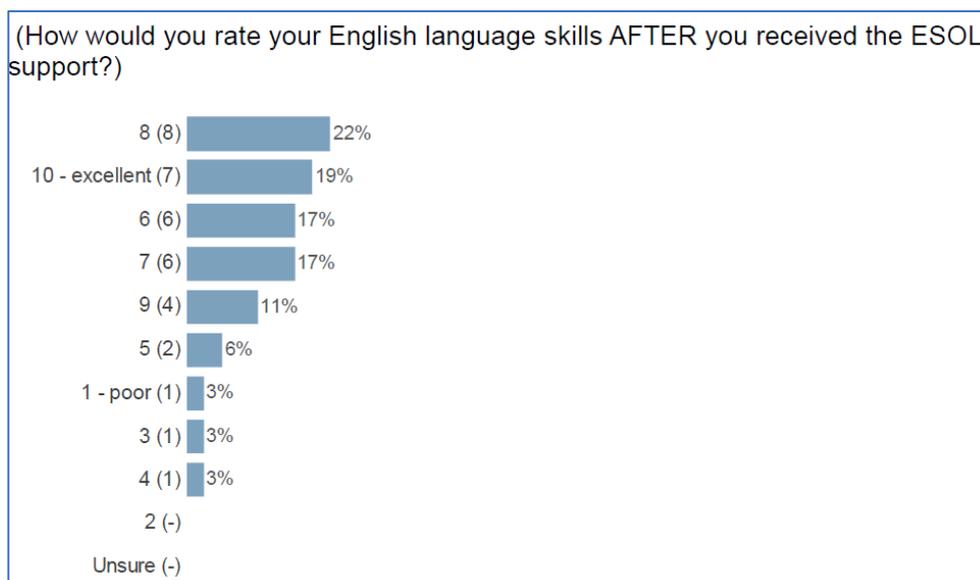


Figure 18 - Beneficiary feedback

As outlined in the project’s framework, and as is now commonly understood across the UK and in other states receiving refugees, learning the local language is essential to enable people to navigate all aspects of their new lives. Additionally, it is recognised that swift language acquisition can reduce culture shock. Learning a language takes a long time and requires a high level of effort. In general, it takes 150-200 guided learning hours to move up one level in ESOL. However, if committed to the process and if sufficient provision is available, it is possible to move from Entry 1 to Entry 3 (CEFR A1-B1) in 9 months. Entry 3 is understood to be the level where learners demonstrate the minimum level of independence and general fluency in their language required in order to apply for jobs. This would require classroom lessons of 3 hours a day (15 hours per week) plus homework. However, since the Adult Education Budget (AEB) funded classes generally only provide 2-5 hours a week, progress is frequently very slow. Access to AEB funded classes is often also restricted in terms of availability and some groups (e.g. Hong Kongers) are not able to access these classes at all or only after fulfilling a 3-year residency requirement.

Although WW4RI did not attempt to resolve the issue of learners reaching Entry 3, progressing beyond that level or provide general ESOL, the project provided substantial funding to ensure that learners had recourse to additional hours of English tuition to complement their AEB classes and help them to progress their learning more quickly. The project’s focus on employability sought a pragmatic approach and only focused on Entry 3 learners, to accelerate their progress in learning and using English as well as help overcome the barriers to employment and better livelihoods. The project was also able to offer ESOL classes quickly, compared to the waiting times that many face when enrolling on AEB funded courses.

In contrast to AEB courses which generally employ a rigid and general curriculum, leading to accredited certification, the project’s assistant manager developed a curriculum of employment sector specific courses which were designed to run for 60 hours each. When the pandemic started, and following a discussion with partners, a series of core curricula (30 hours each) and later in 2022 integration courses (10 hours) to help lower-level learners navigate life in the UK were developed.

Given that the large area covered by EELGA SMP encompasses remote and rural settlements, and the COVID-19 pandemic, it was appreciated that having access to digital devices was necessary to access employability and ESOL meetings. The project funded provision of devices where necessary.

These were either tablets or laptops – it was established early on that using mobile phones would not be sufficient to enable effective learning.

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*Looking at some beneficiaries now and when they first joined WW4RI, one cannot but notice the degree of independence and integration they have developed along the way. Toward the end of the project, we see that the number of beneficiaries getting employment is steadily increasing.*

Essex Integration Employment Adviser

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*WW4RI bespoke ESOL and skills curricula*

<p><b>Core curricula</b>            Driving Theory            IT Skills            Job Search            Study Skills            Confident Women</p>
<p><b>Integration Courses</b>            Financial Literacy            Know Your Employment Rights            Understanding the English school system            Health Literacy            How to use the NHS</p>
<p><b>Sector specific ESOL</b>            Childcare            Construction            Interpreting            Hospitality            Warehousing and Logistics</p>

Project partners were wholly positive about the quality and content of the ESOL materials developed by the assistant manager. Providing funding for staff and ancillary staff to deliver additional hours of ESOL tuition was positively received by staff. This was reflected in the high numbers of students that attended each course, with many students attending more than one course and making good progress in their integration journeys, for example by developing increased confidence, forming friendship groups, navigating the NHS and English school systems and entering the labour market.

The following feedback from the project’s ESOL provider in Bedfordshire is testament to the close relationship between bespoke ESOL courses and the work of the employment advisers.

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*... students found the guidance on crafting CVs and cover letters particularly valuable. By the course's conclusion, every student had prepared their CV and a*

*sample cover letter, ready to adapt for future job applications. For many participants, the concept of a cover letter was entirely new. The instructions on tone, structure, and vocabulary proved immensely beneficial. The practical nature of the course was absolutely crucial to increasing the readiness of learners for work. We are aware of 1 learner who was requested to attend a job interview after submitting a job application during one of the lessons.*

King's Arms Project Manager

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With regards to the extent that the ESOL courses increased readiness for work, partners all remarked that the course content was relevant and taught skills that learners lacked. Partners also agreed that the integration courses gave refugees greater independence and a higher level of agency, which was particularly observed amongst female learners. The Health Literacy course improved attendees' knowledge of how to access primary care through a GP and clarified their rights and entitlements, including the right to request an interpreter for appointments. This course was particularly popular with women which allowed the class to discuss such women's health matters as maternity care, vaccinations for children and female-specific screening. This newfound understanding empowered clients to confidently seek the services they and their family members are entitled to. Many clients are now capable of independently managing appointments for themselves and their families, reducing their reliance on casework teams.

The Financial Literacy classes were also popular with women, many of whom came from contexts in which men are primarily responsible for running the household finances. Attending the course allowed the women to increase their knowledge of budgeting and the UK banking system. Participants commented that they felt more confident to budget for household essentials since completing the course.

The Introduction to Childcare course was successful in Essex as it led to people gaining work placements in schools and nurseries, which was achieved in cooperation with the employment advisers. In a similar manner, those that participated in the customer service course went on to do work placements and then secure paid employment.

The course covering the English school system greatly improved the understanding of participants regarding their rights as parents, which had a marked impact on the empowerment of women and enabled men to take on more supportive roles within the family. The class was a particularly useful space for information sharing and peer support. Parents in the class exchanged the knowledge they'd gained through the experience of having children in the English school system.

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*The support and communication from EELGA was exemplary, as was the expectation of high quality teaching and learning. Schemes of learning were thorough and very useful and the offer to learners of codes for the DVLA website was invaluable to help the learners with self-study.*

WEA ESOL Coordinator

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The Driving Theory course was by far the most popular course. The East of England has refugees settled in urban areas as well as in remote and rural populations, with poor transport links between settlements. Thus, being able to drive is often important for people's professional and social lives. The UK Government allows foreign nationals who hold a licence to drive in the UK using their home countries or international driving licence for one year, beyond that they must convert their licence by sitting the theory and practical tests. Upon completion of the course, ESOL tutors and employment advisers in all counties remarked on the positive impact of the course and high pass rates of people going on to take their driving theory test.

As a result of the success of the driving theory course, successor funding was gained from a regional project, International Recruitment into Adult Social Care East, to make the course materials available online, recognising that there is a high demand for social care workers, but being able to drive is essential for care workers either because of the location of the work or because of the timing of shift work. In September 2023 two driving theory webinars were recorded with places for 75 learners. [These are available here](#). In spring 2024 the materials will also be available as an interactive self-study learning environment. Both resources are being made available for free.

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*After this course I have got my full driving licence.*

A client who completed a Driving Theory course provided by WEA.

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*Once I can get my driving licence, I am able to find a job where is outside my living area.*

A client who completed a Driving Theory course provided by NCC Adult Learning.

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*This course helped me a lot in preparation to the Driving Theory exam. The lecturer organized and structured the lessons well, we were given the access to the platform with all questions and video trainings. I am really glad I attended this course. Although my job does not connect to the driving itself but I passed my Driving Theory exam with the first attempt and now drive to school and back with my daughter and elsewhere I need to. It really helped a lot to adapt myself to live the UK.*

A client who attended a Driving Theory course provided by WEA

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The COVID-10 pandemic meant that ESOL delivery partners had to be agile and flexible, on top of the usual flexibility required when delivering language classes. Typical obstacles to learners' participation remained including attending appointments, transportation and childcare needs. In 2022, The King's Arms Project sought to overcome this by offering transportation and childcare which ensured that there was a good gender balance. Essex Integration was notable for providing "Mobile ESOL" when in 2022, the region received Afghan arrivals wherever housing could be found, often not close to integration infrastructure. Typically, Afghan men had a good command of English but the women didn't. Essex Integration offered ESOL classes delivered in peoples' homes or in the Afghan bridging hotels which overcame barriers to participation due to a lack of transport links and childcare needs. These were well received by providers as evidenced in the quotation below.

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*The ESOL lessons that were delivered in the person's home and in the hotels has had a great impact for the clients especially the [women], we have seen their confidence grow with learning new life skills, new vocabulary, health and safety guidance and they have flourished while doing so. Their English language has improved, some have learnt IT skills for booking appointments and using search engines. They now feel comfortable calling the GP surgery, schools etc. 20 learners have passed their driving theory test, sessions where are combination of practical, being shown around a car, a road mat, with signs, trunks, cars etc and vocabulary. Other learners we taught things that were important to them and their new life in the UK.*

Mobile ESOL provider in Essex

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#### Exam preparation courses

Once the project orientated its offer towards high skilled learners in 2022, the project funded access to a number of training programmes for language examinations which are essential for entering university, many professions and the medical sector. These were provided by Specialist Language Courses (SLC) and delivered fully online, ensuring that they were accessible to all beneficiaries in the East of England. The most popular course was the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) which is required by universities and many workplaces. The OET (Occupational English Test) course was also run to support individuals into medical professions.

IELTS exam preparation participants – 93 OET exam preparation participants – 11
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These courses provided students with the opportunity to improve their language skills across all four sub-skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking. The courses also provided an opportunity for students to increase their accuracy in use of vocabulary and grammatical structures to allow them to communicate in a more precise manner necessary for academia and work.

There are several ways that IELTS courses increased students' readiness for applying for work in the UK. In the IELTS preparation courses, a variety of topics were covered related to work, different fields and general interest. The multi-topic nature of the IELTS exam allowed students to improve their ability to discuss a range of topics relating to their own specific careers, thus increasing readiness to discuss their previous career history in the context of a job interview. The writing element of IELTS courses provided students with the opportunity to write clear structured paragraphs and produce longer pieces of cohesive writing. These skills are directly transferable to writing cover letters to explain work history. For those wishing to enter higher or further education, the IELTS courses provided students with the opportunity to expand their knowledge of language related to study at a further education level. Students developed their ability to analyse and interpret data in writing, evaluate and discuss a variety of academic topics and give opinions. IELTS exam scores are an entry requirement for UK universities for international students, therefore students wishing to resume or continue studies in the UK are required to achieve a minimum score of 6.0.

The course led to a number of students being considered "test-ready" and went on to take the formal IELTS exam.

At the close of the project:

- 69% of learners were recommended as test ready.
- The project funded 21 IELTS exams.
- The project funded 4 OET exams.

Based on student feedback the IELTS course had a large impact on student applying for jobs and further study,

- 67% of respondents took IELTS for their job/career.
- 33% of respondents took IELTS for university entry.

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*I've got a job.*

*The course helped me get the required scores for my university.*

*The positive feedback helps me [with] daily communication which is important for me.*

Quotes from IELTS and OET exam preparation course graduates

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The OET course is needed for people wanting to find work in the medical sector and the course enrolment included people from different professions – Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacology. For all professions the vocabulary throughout the course was highly applicable to working in a healthcare context, providing learners with the opportunity to develop their knowledge of medical terms in English alongside patient-friendly terms commonly used in the healthcare industry in the UK. The OET course placed a strong emphasis on good clinical communication skills, allowing the

students to practise communicating with patients in an appropriate and effective manner. One of the major successes of this course is learners improving their clinical communication skills. During the OET course, 57% of learners improved in their clinical communication skills, as evidenced by in-course mock exams. We consider this to be both encouraging good practice within the course and, by extension, in the healthcare sector in the UK. Students who have completed this course and gained employment are now able to practise using good clinical communication skills in their jobs in the healthcare sector in the UK.

In the course, 42% of students are working towards their target level, with 1 student having passed the OET exam early and 1 student having achieved the required English level via the IELTS exam and seeking to develop their clinical expertise.

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*These courses improved their academic and sector specific English especially for beneficiaries of medical background such as doctors, dentists and nurses. These courses brought many beneficiaries closer to their medical careers. [Meanwhile] some clients who did IELTS course accessed BA and MA university courses.*

### Specialist Language Courses

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#### Results

By the end of the IELTS and OET courses, students commented that their listening skills improved, they felt more confident speaking in a variety of situations and their writing accuracy improved. By building up student confidence in these areas, they are now more able to use these skills to speak out for themselves in a work and study context, thus increasing their level of personal agency. This is evidenced by student feedback. One student stated: "I feel more confident in communication and people who surround me are proud to know that I passed this exam which influences my efforts to find a job connected with my qualification". Further evidence can be seen in the end of course survey data below.

75% of respondents felt they made a lot of progress in listening	"I believe that my listening skill has improved a lot"
75% of respondents felt they made a lot of progress in reading	"...I am more confident now"
50% of respondents felt they made a lot of progress in speaking	"I am more fluent than I was before"
50% of respondents felt they made progress in writing	"My writing skills improved a lot since I took the course"

#### Lessons Learned and Good Practices

- In Norfolk, the ESOL coordinator informed the project team that the lack of official initial assessment of levels made some classes difficult to teach because the classes contained learners with different levels. We would recommend that counties have a uniform ESOL

initial assessment tool and one ESOL enrolment hub so that all ESOL learners can access classes that are suitable for their needs.

- The ESOL providers in Bedfordshire highlighted that the warehousing and customer service courses were the least popular, as learners said they felt they could get work in warehouses, in particular, without doing the skills course. We would recommend that there be an added extra for these sorts of courses to be viable, such as a guaranteed interview with one or more employers at the end of the course (akin to the IKEA course in Peterborough).
- As the majority of courses were delivered online due to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, overcoming gaps in digital literacy was vital as many learners had no experience with learning online and/or did not have suitable devices. To overcome these challenges the project was able to apportion budgets to provide tablets. Initially many tried to access classes on their mobile phones, which was considered insufficient due to the small screen size. Whilst delivering classes online was initially considered a challenge, in many respects they provided unforeseen benefits: many women had never been to college and online courses in the privacy of their own homes was ideal for them; the online courses provided an opportunity for our clients to adapt to the changes brought on by the pandemic in a positive way by staying productive and connected to others; and they increased confidence in IT which is necessary for job hunting and employment. We would recommend providing supplementary online ESOL classes online to boost ESOL access and accelerate learning.
- Training for community interpreting was delivered by Community Action Dacorum across the whole of the East. It provided learners with a direct pathway into jobs in interpreting, the nature of which allowed flexibility to fit assignments around appointments with employment advisers and skills classes. It is important to note that the qualification did not offer a formal qualification which is necessary for the majority of highly paid interpreting jobs in professional settings such as court cases, but it provided enough training to interpret at informal, community or non-critical events or meetings. Community Action Dacorum's close links with the Hertfordshire Interpreting and Translation Service (HITS) ensured that the course was comprehensive and facilitated the link to employment. Of those that graduated from the course four went on to employment with HITS, taking on a combined number of 413 assignments. A lesson learned was to facilitate additional courses to provide beneficiaries with interim employment and capitalise on their native languages.

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*“The Introduction to Interpreting course focused on the principles of interpreting that you need to consider whilst providing an interpreting service. These principles are not something you have in your mind until you are told them, such as remaining impartial, as most of the time interpreters are from a different cultures, so they have a sense of what is going on when interpreting to someone from the same culture and to the professional. I feel confident I could move into this area of work as the role requires a lot of patience, especially when in an audio call and trying to convey a particular message and they are struggling to understand you, and you cannot hear them that well.”*

A client who attended the Introduction to Interpreting course provided by CAD.

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- To meet the project’s goals of supporting highly skilled refugees and third country nationals into employment, the project sought to provide training for the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) which is essential to show that people entering construction jobs have the necessary skills, professionalism and attention to safety. Whilst this was a popular option with employment advisers at the start of the project due to the prevalence of resettled refugees with construction experience, implementing the course during the pandemic proved to be extremely difficult. This was because of the need for online rather than face-to-face practical teaching, combined with the relatively high level of English needed to access the course, even with a bi-lingual teaching assistant in the class. The referrals to the course were fewer than forecast, attendance was patchy and the results achieved did not reflect the time and finances invested to offer the course. We would recommend a CSCS course with a bi-lingual TA for other projects, but in person and only when you have a large enough cohort of learners. Otherwise, perhaps linking with existing CSCS providers and deploying an interpreter would be more cost-effective.
- Travel costs, childcare and other commitments such as (lower paid) employment were major obstacles to full engagement in all sessions. Consideration should be given to ensuring courses are delivered flexibly and, with travel costs factored in, if possible. Good practices included the provision of transport in Bedfordshire and Mobile ESOL in people’s homes in Essex.

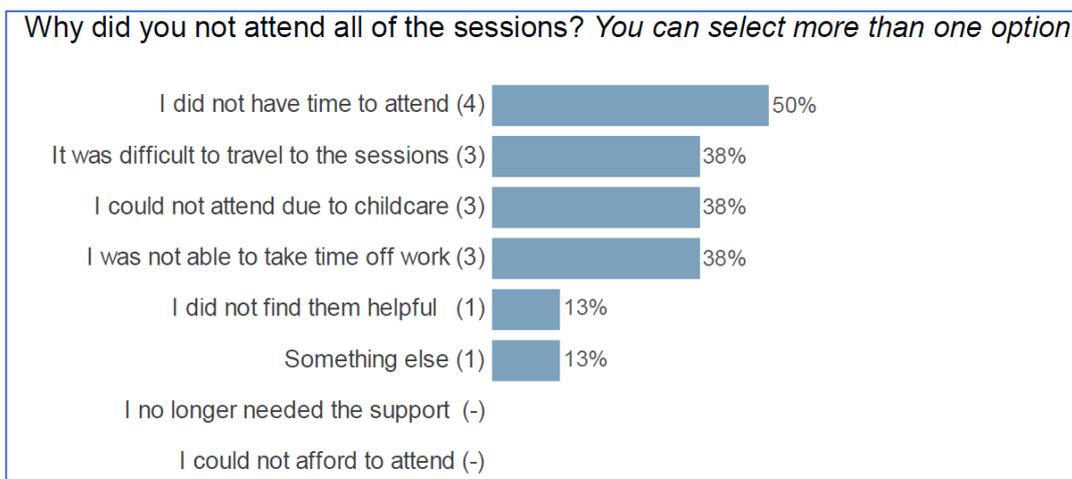


Figure 19 - Beneficiary feedback

## ESOL and skills case studies

Mrs. B is a 30-year-old refugee who fled her home country due to conflict and persecution. In 2021 she and her three children were resettled to Bedfordshire. As a mother, she bears much of the responsibility for childcare including ensuring that her children access the healthcare they need. Through the WW4RI Project, Mrs. B enrolled in a course focused on 'How to Use the NHS' where she gained essential knowledge and skills on accessing healthcare including primary care.

Through role-play exercises, she developed the confidence and ability to book appointments. Consequently, Mrs. B now efficiently manages her own medical appointments as well as those of her children, this includes ensuring that they stay up-to-date with their vaccinations. Through the WW4RI project both her and her children's access to healthcare services has been significantly improved.

Mrs. G, a 26-year-old mother of 4, was resettled in the UK in 2019 due to the civil war in her home country. Hailing from a rural community, she had limited formal education and faced substantial challenges adapting to life in the UK. Through the WW4RI Project, Mrs. G enrolled in the Financial Literacy class offered by the King's Arms Project. Through this course, she acquired budgeting skills and developed an understanding of the importance of managing her household's energy consumption. Due to personal circumstances, Mrs. G is responsible for household matters including the family's finances. The Financial Literacy class has empowered her to effectively manage her family's finances, ensuring that they live within their means.

In the OET course, there was one learner who had taken the OET nursing exam twice before starting to study with SLC, but they had not yet passed. This learner stated that the OET course "was beneficial for me to consolidate my English foundation". After attending the course for 14 weeks, the learner took the OET exam and passed with the grades required for registration with the Nursing Midwifery Council. In feedback, the candidate state that "It has been difficult for me to pass the OET". We consider this a major success as the course supported them to reaching the next stage in their career here in the UK. This learner is now preparing for the OSCE examinations which is the next step in obtaining a PIN number from the Nursing Midwifery Council in order to work in the UK as a nurse.

## Wellbeing

The Refugee Council provided wellbeing and therapeutic support in Bedfordshire (from 2022), Essex, Hertfordshire as well as Cambridgeshire. Health Outreach, run by NHS Essex University Partnership Trust, provided these services in Suffolk. The service was supported by match funding from what were Clinical Commissioning Groups (now ICBs) in each county who received funding as a result of supporting the local refugee resettlement programme. Without match funding from the CCG in Norfolk, we could not offer wellbeing support and focused instead on the other streams. This did give us the chance to look at whether the availability of a well-being service had any impact on the results of the other project strands.

- Well-being was found to be a key facilitator of success in the other strands, with 379 beneficiaries accessing well-being support as a first activity.
- A total of 419 beneficiaries received well-being support.

Mental health problems are very stigmatising in some countries and people hide the way they feel in fear of being labelled. Without accessing help, the prospects of work, learning and overall integration are reduced. A key tenet, indicated by our partners, was that refugees have very little control over their lives because a lot is decided for them including the country in which they find asylum, the town or city they move to, the language they have to learn and the sectors they have to find employment in due to the bureaucratic and language barriers they face in their country of safety.

Thus, giving them the choice of what type of therapy and how they can access it (online or in person) has been at the heart of our partners' practice. With this in mind, project providers found that a range of approaches was necessary to meet people's needs which can vary in complexity, age group, and their personality types which respond to different interventions. Overarching themes of cognitive behavioural therapy, breath work, cognitive behavioural exercises, recognising personal value, empowerment, confidence and "chasing your dreams" were embedded throughout. Types of interventions included:

- Group social activity sessions:
  - Creative play sessions for children as a method of conveying memories of their home country and life in the UK.
  - Yoga and creativity groups.
  - Gender-specific groups.
  - Social cooking groups for young people.
  - Dance movement groups (for men, women and mixed).
  - Online mindfulness training.
  - Mindfulness walks.
  - Dramatherapy.
  - Sleep hygiene workshops.
- One-to-one talking therapy over 12 weeks.
- Psychoeducational sessions and presentations to help increase beneficiaries' understanding of mental health and wellbeing and increase referrals to group and individual sessions.
- Creating 'discharge grounding boxes' (Health Outreach) which were decorated and personalised boxes containing items that would help them practise some of the skills they learnt and a first point of call during or just before a crisis or emotional distress.

The evaluation of beneficiaries showed a marked shift in reported wellbeing, with the majority reporting poor wellbeing at the outset and a majority reporting excellent wellbeing after receiving support.

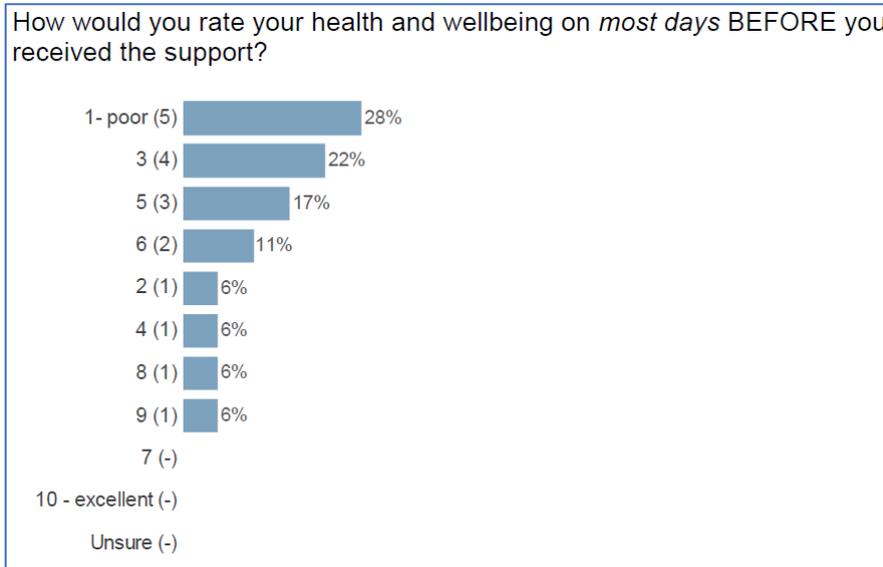


Figure 20 - Beneficiary feedback

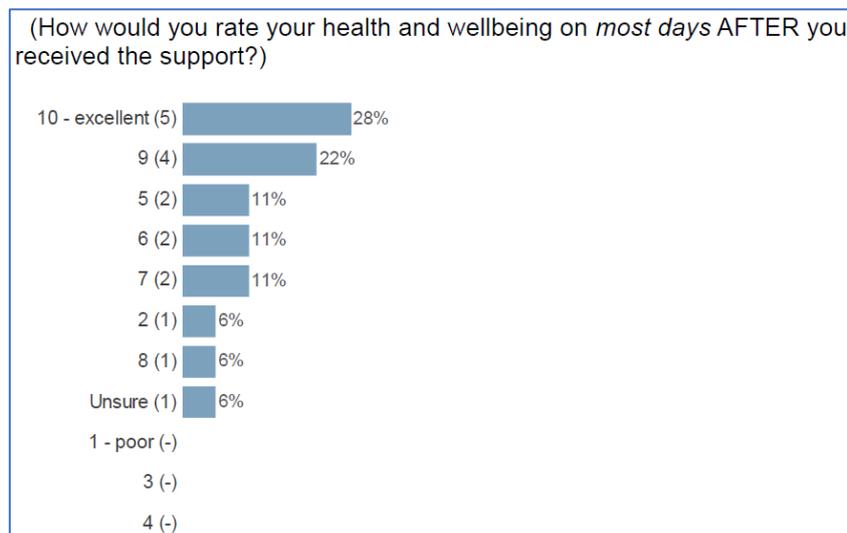


Figure 21 - Beneficiary feedback

Therapeutic support across the East of England region facilitated a positive and beneficial impact on the health and wellbeing of beneficiaries on the project in various ways which increased readiness for work. Close relationships and regular meetings with the employment advisers ensured that services were delivered when appropriate. Partners shared that our service enabled people to access support quicker than if they had approached the NHS through normal avenues.

- The Refugee Council reported that one-to-one therapy played an important role as it allowed the client to feel valued and their feelings validated in a safe space. On the other hand, group sessions and activity-based sessions provided opportunities for collective healing and bonding

which accelerated results. For example, in Marks Tey (Afghan refugees' bridging hotel) therapists led children's groups and invited children to decide which games they would play, giving them licence, self-choice and empowerment. During these sessions children shared their experiences of life at home, their journey and life in the UK, whilst engrossed in a fun and safe activity.

- The women's yoga and creative groups in Cambridge were notably successful because the participants immediately formed a close bond and friendships continued outside the space of the session through WhatsApp groups and other impromptu activities. These single-gender sessions were also a place where women could engage in body movement without worry and judgement.
- Sessions conducted for Ukrainian children enrolled at a school in Hertfordshire were deemed successful as teachers commented on the positive changes in the pupils' engagement - one of the children was withdrawn and showed little emotion but the therapist witnessed a significant shift in his mood, expressiveness and confidence.
- Another strand of activity that was offered by the Refugee Council was psychoeducational workshops. Rather than being experiential, these sought to increase participants' knowledge of psychological wellbeing and provide concrete tools they could use in future. One such workshop was delivered to Ukrainian parents and their children in North East Essex. It engaged the children in play to help them reconnect with each other whilst educating parents on the power of play. Other activities were held which provided both experiential and educational insights on managing mental health and wellbeing. Where participants did not have a high level of English, an interpreter was brought in.

#### Lessons Learned and Good Practices

- Overall, therapists noted that the COVID-19 pandemic and resorting to working online had no impact on people's engagement. Indeed, it increased self-referrals amongst Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) who saw promotional materials online. This modality of working also suited people who could not commute to more populated areas due to the poor transport links in the East of England.
- Flexibility was essential to both the Refugee Council and Health Outreach. Understanding that clients' underlying mental health needs can contribute to low attendance levels, dropouts and delays and enabling clients to re-engage when they were mentally able ensured the success of interventions. Some clients dropped out before post-treatment assessments could be made, however it was noted that improvements had been achieved. Additionally, despite the burgeoning number of clients being referred to the therapy and wellbeing strand, partners were constantly flexible to enable clients who had dropped out to re-enrol. With those who were regularly in attendance, therapists were aware that clients were not always willing to share personal thoughts and feelings immediately. Health Outreach shared several example statements which their therapists employed to recognise this and allow clients to share at their own pace.
- The project's partners stressed the importance of celebrating achievements. Health Outreach noted that therapists showed flexibility when clients did not attend sessions due to taking

trips, visiting friends or undertaking “life administration”. In fact, these occasions were celebrated as a sign of clients demonstrating increased agency and independence.

- Whilst providing person-centred wellbeing support to refugees, when this is part of a holistic project such as WW4RI, other sectors stand to gain increased knowledge and understanding of trauma informed theory and the importance of addressing underlying mental health needs before embarking on practical steps such as language acquisition and job hunting. The Refugee Council therefore delivered a number of training workshops on trauma informed practices to professionals supporting young people in Peterborough; and another session was delivered in Cambridge to members of the public as part of Refugee Week.
- Additionally, it was reported by Health Outreach that many of these issues were either not disclosed to GPs due to a lack of experience and understanding on how to seek help or, if they were, they were not adequately supported by GPs. Health Outreach in particular, being part of the NHS, was able to relay clients’ diagnoses and progression to GPs.
- Whilst using an interpreter was often necessary, there were challenges that should always be considered, particularly if a client has developed a sense of familiarity with the interpreter to share personal information, or if the interpreter does not have experience and sensitivity when operating in a clinical environment. In one county, an interpreter was employed to support a female UASC client overcome low mood and anxiety. After the fourth session, the usual interpreter was unable to continue. An agency interpreter, randomly allocated, was enlisted. After the appointment, the client told the therapist that she would rather wait for the old interpreter, resulting in a significant break in the therapeutic process. Further probing by the therapist discovered that the interpreter had made personal comments about the work of the therapist which broke the bond of trust. A complaint was made to the agency, who informed that this was an isolated incident, and the original interpreter resumed work and the sessions continued as before.

## Results

The Refugee Council used Core 10 (for adults) and YP Core (for young people) as assessment tools to understand and monitor the effectiveness of support. “*CORE stands for “Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation” and the CORE system comprises tools and thinking to support monitoring of change and outcomes in routine practice in psychotherapy, counselling and any other work attempting to promote psychological recovery, health and wellbeing*”.<sup>2</sup> The CORE outcome measure (CORE-10) is a session-by-session monitoring tool with items covering anxiety, depression, trauma, physical problems, functioning and risk to self. The measure has six high intensity/severity and four low intensity/severity items. The Young Person’s CORE (YP-CORE) is a ten-item measure designed for use with 11-16 year-olds. The authors of this framework provided extensive documentation on implementation of CORE during COVID and in online environments (Ibid.). The positive results (see below) gained from this framework suggest that it has sufficient flexibility to deal not just with critical emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic but also operate across large regions – like the East of England – where transport connections and distance can impede effective intervention. This sort of flexibility may be of interest, if not already used, across other Strategic Migration Partnerships and county councils.

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<sup>2</sup> [CORE Measurement Tools \(CORE-10\) \(corc.uk.net\)](https://www.corc.uk.net)

Overall, post treatment assessments showed that clients moved from moderate and severe emotional distress scores to low level distress or healthy scores. Some even achieved “psychological flexibility”, evidenced through symptom reduction and psychometric scores which is the true marker of emotional health; being able to respond with skill and confidence when challenges arise, rather than living a life absent of challenges and varied emotion.

Table 2, below, shows the overview of outcomes of the Refugee Council’s wellbeing support provided to clients from April 2020 to September 2023. There is evidence that the majority of clients have experienced improvement in their health and wellbeing across different items such as mental and physical wellbeing, safety and social inclusion. 94% of clients received a review and the majority reported an improvement in their symptoms.<sup>3</sup>

*Table 2 – outcome for all clients on CORE-10 and YP-CORE frameworks assessed by Refugee Council*

Type of Core	Outcome	Clients with need	% Clients with review	Clients with Improvement	% of Clients with Improvement
<b>CORE 10</b>	Improved mental and physical wellbeing	88	100%	75	85%
<b>CORE 10</b>	Improved safety	76	86%	54	71%
<b>CORE 10</b>	Increased social inclusion	86	98%	60	70%
<b>CORE 10</b>	Improved ability to make informed choices	78	89%	50	64%
<b>YP CORE</b>	Improved mental and physical wellbeing	166	98%	130	78%
<b>YP CORE</b>	Improved safety	151	89%	98	65%
<b>YP CORE</b>	Increased social inclusion	161	95%	114	71%
<b>YP CORE</b>	Improved ability to make informed choices	163	96%	109	67%

### Wellbeing case studies

The case studies below illustrate the figures above. Our partners noted that as wellbeing and therapy needs lessened, clients were ready – and willing - to take on more practical activities such as learning English, developing their skills and applying for jobs or developing a business. This fully confirms the project’s intentional framework to include wellbeing support alongside livelihood and language training, as without a relatively stable mental health base, people do not have the capacity to undertake further activities.

<sup>3</sup> Please note that the CORE 10/YP CORE statistics are for all clients on the WW4RI Therapeutic Service; including clients within the five ICB areas. The number also includes clients that may have disengaged with the service at some point and therefore a review would not have been done.

*Adult Female*

This client was suffering from high levels of anxiety and felt depressed, she was also experiencing a number of health difficulties. The Refugee Council planned to have 12-15 sessions of online therapy with the assistance of an interpreter. The focus would be to begin with grounding and managing the symptoms of trauma such as high anxiety, difficulty in managing her mood, sensitivity to noise and some dissociative features. To achieve this they would introduce mindfulness, create a toolbox of distractions and enjoyable activities, potentially discuss past experiences which the client was reliving.

The client was able to engage in therapy very well even though she was guarded to begin with. She appreciated having a suitable interpreter who spoke the right dialect of Arabic. She also told me she felt listened to by me without judgment. The client told me about bereavements she suffered and about the lack of compassion and hostility she suffered while living in Lebanon, before coming to the UK. She struggled with learning English and felt isolated. Together with the client we found ways to draw from her existing strengths – she has a loving, supportive husband and a sister she is best friends with.

I asked for permission to get in contact with the client's GP, as the client felt she's been ignored and misrepresented in the past. This meant further medical investigations were conducted.

I enjoyed my sessions with this client and she has noticed an improvement in certain aspects of her day to day life as a result. For example she was more capable of communicating how she felt to her family and attending her ESOL classes. She was more hopeful about finding employment in the UK in the future.

*Eight-year-old-male*

The client was referred by the school support worker. He didn't participate in classes, sometimes hid under the desk and refused to come out. His family fled the Ukraine as the city they came from was bombed. To assess, I spoke to the client's mom who explained about her concerns. These included the client's often angry, anxious mood, strong dislike of attending school and excessive worrying about the family who stayed in Ukraine. I asked about those close to him to understand the environment on the systemic level.

The Refugee Council offered up to 12 online sessions, which can be difficult with a young client like this. The plan was to introduce grounding techniques by engaging in arts, play therapy using online software and simply talk about his activities with the help of an interpreter. The session length sometimes had to be reduced in order to accommodate the needs of my client. Activities include using art to represent feelings and experiences. Besides discussing the client's day to day activities, there was also discussion about the client's biography. All sessions were followed by liaising with the client's mother, keeping her in the loop while preserving the client's confidentiality. Therapists worked on regulating emotions, scheduling enjoyable activities, managing distress.

After completion, the client adjusted to his school life very well. He also felt capable of facing new challenges in the future, including feeling more confident to move to a new school.

*Adult Male*

On first meeting M presented as extremely anxious and guarded; his hands and legs were visibly shaking. He reported that his mental health problems started 10 years ago immediately after he was released from prison where he had spent 2 years as a political prisoner. He stated that he often re-experiences his feeling of terror and torment from his experience of torture and ill-treatment whilst in prison. He said that several things can trigger this including bright lights, certain films or television reports featuring prisons. He also stated that he continues to suffer from eyesight problems, headaches and migraines. M had been very wealthy and successful, with many material goods including several cars and a large house. Following his arrest all his assets were confiscated, and this loss is something that he reflects on frequently now, comparing his current situation living in Council accommodation with second-hand furniture and no vehicle to what he has lost. He stated that he feels these thoughts contribute significantly to his depression and feelings of inadequacy. M moved to the UK two years ago and he believes that both his mental and physical symptoms have deteriorated. He is particularly concerned about his migraines, aches and pains in his body, eyesight changes, numbness and tingling. M reports feeling very isolated with no friends and unable to work due to chronic headaches and his mental health problems. He also reports feeling inadequate and having lost the respect of his family as he can no longer provide for his family as he did before, or help in the way he would like (e.g. go to his children's school).

During the sessions, therapists discussed M's life before his arrest; practiced breathing exercises; full body scanning; grounding and visualization. The therapist asked the Job Centre for a three-month break from job search meetings, which they agreed to, in order to focus on therapy.

During sessions M worked hard to bring relaxation and mindfulness into his everyday life. As our time together progressed, M reported that his anxiety and depression were lessening and he found going out of his house much easier, to a position where he was able to start mindfulness walking on a daily basis. He also reported feeling more positive about the future, and no longer had any thoughts of suicide. M's relationships with his wife and children improved significantly and he reported feeling more respected and heard by his family. His wife even started to join him in his relaxation and grounding exercises.

At the end of the treatment, therapists felt confident to discharge M into the care of his GP who was fully aware of his background and willing to help him.

*Adult male*

A young man was severely struggling with low mood, absconding, night terrors, low motivation, and social withdrawal. He was suffering isolation, grieving his father's death, and worried about his siblings perilous migratory journeys.

He was resistant to receiving therapy but, with time and positive reinforcement, he became open and was engaging very well. Health Outreach established his strengths and values and explored what life could look like for him. A few weeks later, he came into a session with a bright smile and

upright posture, which was a completely new sight and indeed he shared pictures of what he did that week. He had baked bread and shared it with the people in his accommodation. In a past session the therapist had learned that baking was important to him, as his father was a baker and he would sometimes teach him how to bake.

Health Outreach were gently moving from suppression to expression, values exploration, and acknowledging painful emotion. The love of baking helped him feel connected to his father and kept his memory alive. Somewhere, along the way, he recognised he had agency and he could use it productively. He asked his social worker if he could go to baking school or have regular cooking classes (after a long period of completely disengaging from educational or social activities). This was agreed and it became a frequent part of his timetable. This, along with many other small triumphs led to a complete transformation of his initial presentation. Most importantly, this was an idea he had for himself, by himself. He (and many other clients) would go on to do great, beneficial things for themselves, because they stepped into their independence and personal agency.

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*Overall, being a part of this project has been a life changing experience and I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to be a small part of so many people's lives, whilst working with professionals from varied disciplines- all with one common goal - the improved life and wellbeing of the clients. I believe we have really done this, in ways we will never truly be able to quantify. It is an honour for them to have shared their life stories with me, and trusted me with the enormous and special responsibility of being their therapist.*

*Health Outreach*

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*Working on WW4RI project has been a great experience. We had many success stories of clients really benefitting from our service. The therapists worked independently to deliver their best in order to help our clients adjust to their new lives in the UK. In retrospect, the scale of the project was large and spread between not very many individuals, which meant we often worked in isolation. I am aware this has been a challenge to some of our therapists who could've benefited from more team interactions, or sharing their caseload with a colleague. We have ensured to have regular team meetings, peer supervisions and management supervisions, which certainly helped.*

*Refugee Council*

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## Management and coordination

A key recommendation of the independent evaluation of the project that was published in December 2022 was to increase opportunities for partners to liaise with each in person other across the three streams – employability, language and skills, and wellbeing. Accordingly, the WW4RI project team organised and chaired three rounds of meetings in each county for all providers. Where possible these were in-person. Additionally, the independent evaluation recommended that ample time was given on agendas for staff to raise questions and problems which the team sought to provide in these meetings. They were received well by partners as it allowed them to have an appreciation of the whole project, improve communication and referrals as well as undertake collaborative troubleshooting.

The project team organised two large in-person events in 2021 and 2022 which offered the opportunity to present the project’s major successes and determine future priorities. The 2021 event was seminal as it was the first opportunity everyone had to meet after the pandemic lockdowns. At each meeting group discussions were arranged by location, allowing informal “corridor” discussions to take place, thus strengthening regional cooperation. Presentations from delivery partners set the pace and identified emerging good practices, identifying what worked well and what were upcoming priorities for each stream. The meeting in 2022 was also an opportunity to analyse the findings of the independent project evaluation and determine next steps to implement the recommendations. The project team were thankful to participants for their ongoing support for the project and in 2021 distributed awards including “Most Multi-talented Employment Adviser”, “For going above and beyond to deliver outstanding service to our beneficiaries” and “Innovation and Creativity in a Therapeutic Setting”. It was agreed that face to face meetings such as this were valuable, especially when working across such a vast region post-pandemic, and this modality led to the quarterly regional meetings which took place in 2023.

Another action from the independent evaluation was to create an additional role within the team who would work with employment advisers and other partners to consolidate learning and good practices across the project. This also enabled additional ESOL lesson observations to take place. The role of Training and Compliance Manager was filled in early 2023 and has been very effective in understanding the key learning points from the project and achieving greater levels of consistency across the delivery partners.

Co-locating services helped partners liaise with each other better to provide holistic support. For example, in Bedfordshire the Refugee Council therapist provided services at the same premises as the employment adviser, BRASS. In Norwich the employment adviser operated from council offices in The Forum, a centrally located multi-purpose venue containing the library and other services. Insistence on providing support from a central location and asking clients to attend in person was deemed to be a good practice to promote punctuality and independence.

## External communications and publicity

As the project neared its end, it became essential to ensure that the achievements were recorded. The project team commissioned a PR company to provide external communications. This helped raise the profile of the delivery partners in their local areas and also increased positive and accurate public messaging about the contribution refugees make to our communities.

The project team facilitated contact with organisations, partners and refugees that were willing to be interviewed. Our PR partner drafted and issued numerous press releases to local and regional print, online media and radio. These gained significant interest, some of which are shown below.

All press releases were also made available on the SMP's news site - [News - EELGA SMP](#)

## Ukrainian refugee living in Felixstowe ready to launch board game

[Ukrainian refugee living in Felixstowe ready to launch board game \(suffolknews.co.uk\)](#)

## Strategic Migration Partnership shines a light on project's success for Ukrainian refugees in Felixstowe

[Strategic Migration Partnership shines a light on project's success for Ukrainian refugees in Felixstowe | Local News | News | Felixstowe Nub News | by Derek Davis](#)

## Colchester translator shows what refugees can offer our society

[Colchester translator shows what refugees can offer our society | Gazette \(gazette-news.co.uk\)](#)

Ukrainian woman living in Norfolk says she "wants to give back"

[Ukrainian woman living in Norfolk says she "wants to give back" | News - Greatest Hits Radio \(Norfolk and North Suffolk\) \(planetradio.co.uk\)](#)

## Charity's mock interviews help Peterborough refugees access the job market

[Charity's mock interviews help Peterborough refugees access the job market \(peterboroughtoday.co.uk\)](#)



Heart Radio and Greatest Hits Radio picked up on a number of press releases, resulting in interviews which were aired throughout the day and at hourly news bulletins. This included interviews with successful entrepreneurs; an interview with the project manager about the importance of businesses welcoming refugee employees, with reference to the recent successes with the East of England Co-op; and regarding the need to recruit more ESOL teachers in the East.

## Legacy

### Operational and guidance documents

The WW4RI project team and partners have gained significant learning through this project, which has been summarised in the previous sections. In addition, the team and partners have amassed numerous operational documents and guidance which the team will make available for those wishing to develop similar projects.

These will be available online in early 2024.

<b>Summary of legacy documents available in early 2024</b>
– Research-based framework of the project and project logic matrix
– Design, kick-off and close checklists
– Beneficiary spreadsheets, referral forms, employment action plans
– Reporting guidance – highlighting importance of qualitative and quantitative approaches
– UK ENIC instructions and cover letter
– Training guidance for employment advisers
– Job search and CV writing guides
– Refugee doctors materials

### ESOL Curricula

The ESOL curricula will also be available online. These will be available to purchase in early 2024.

<b>Core curricula</b> Driving Theory IT Skills Job Search Study Skills Confident Women
<b>Integration Courses</b> Financial Literacy Know Your Employment Rights Understanding the English school system Health Literacy

<p><b>Sector specific ESOL</b></p> <p>Childcare Construction Interpreting High Skills Job Search Hospitality Warehousing and Logistics</p>
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### Driving theory

Given the popularity of the driving theory course, we have received funding (see next section) to develop these into self-access, interactive learning modules.

These will be available freely in spring 2024.

Until then, [two webinars are freely available on our website](#), covering the entire driving theory curriculum.

*If you would like to receive further information about the legacy documents and purchasing the ESOL curricula, please email [gill.searl@eelga.gov.uk](mailto:gill.searl@eelga.gov.uk)*

## Next Steps

The SMP was keen not to lose the momentum and expertise that was developed across the region and was pleased to secure several additional funding streams. These funding streams have been united under a single banner – [“Employability for Overseas Nationals \(EON\)”](#) with a particular focus on high skilled individuals (graduates and professional careers) and those with medical training and experience.

This complements two other national refugee employability projects that cover the region, the Refugee Employability Programme (funded by the Home Office and delivered by Get Set and Reed in Partnership) and STEP Ukraine (delivered by World Jewish Relief and British Council). EON enables the team to retain the employment advisers who have a good understanding of their local employment landscape; and also ensures that clients who entered WW4RI receive continued support, through EON or one of the other specialist refugee employability projects.

Eligible EON clients will continue to receive comprehensive employment advice from a specialist, experienced adviser. This will include assistance to prepare CVs, application forms and interview practice. The employment adviser will work with each individual to help them find vacancies in line with their previous experience, qualifications and career goals. They will also provide support once a client has found work. This may include completing references and right to work checks, understanding contracts and facilitating conversations with superiors. The employment advisers are able to work with clients who have a wide range of career goals. As a result of our cooperation with our partner MENTA, we are also able to provide support for self-employment and setting up businesses.

In addition, the employment advisers will offer specific support for people wishing to enter adult social care. The EELGA SMP is achieving this as a partner of a wider project – International Recruitment East. Funded by the Department for Health and Social Security, the project will support international recruits into the sector, which is experiencing a shortfall in people to fill a large number of vacancies.

Developing the driving theory e-learning modules is a core element of this, recognising that social care staff in the East must be able to drive to reach patients owing to the region’s limited transport links and road systems. Employment advisers will also reorient their time and attention to supporting clients into adult social care roles. [For more information click here.](#)

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