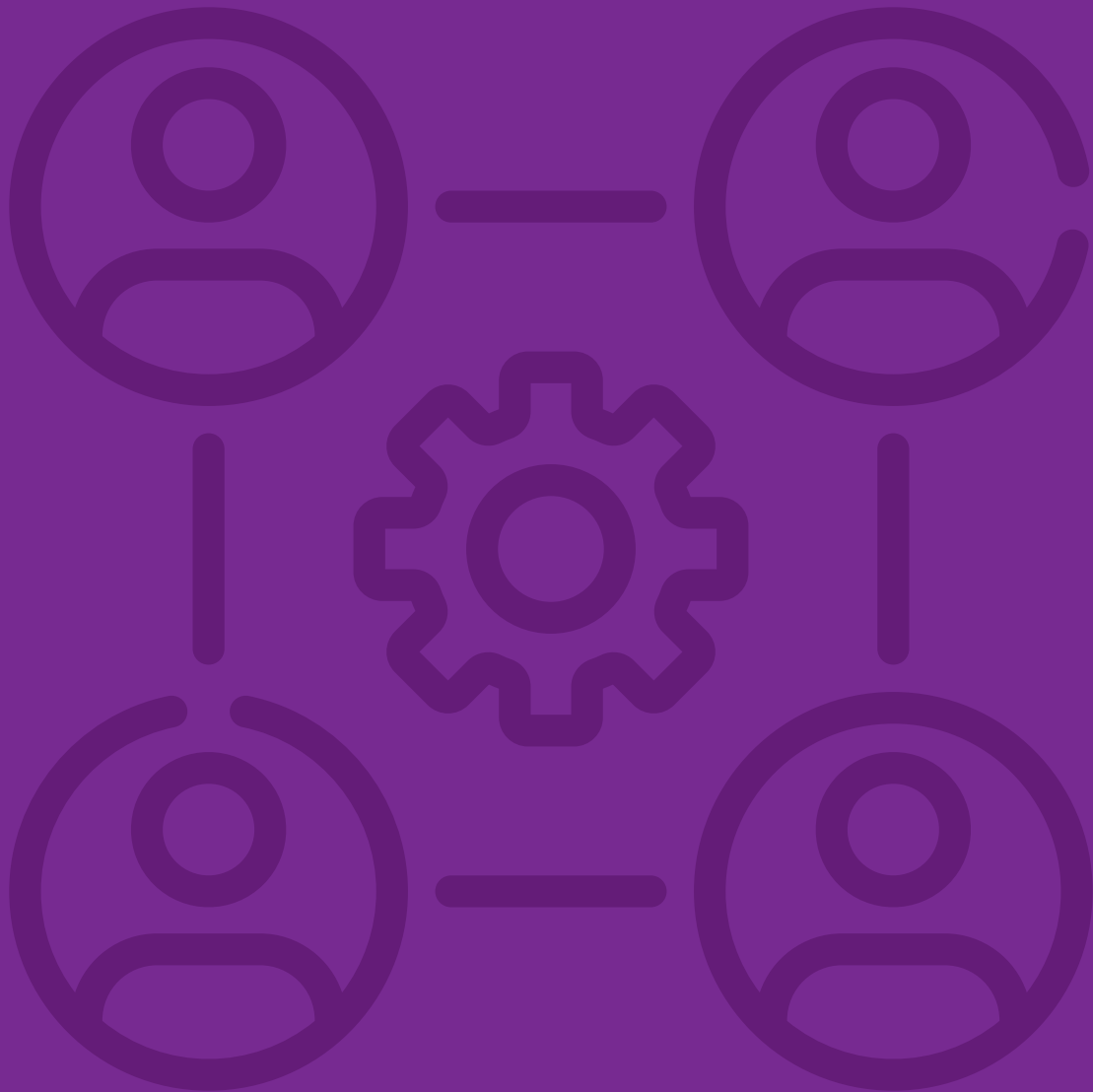


Equalities Gathering Employability & Welfare



Section 1 Event Details



Event Title	Equalities Gathering – Employability & Welfare
Event organised by	Equalities Integration Officer
Event Venue	Calton Heritage Learning Centre, Glasgow
Event Date	Saturday 1st February 2020
Event Start – End times	10.00 – 3.30pm



Section 2 Event Agenda

Time	Activity	Outcome
9.00 – 10.00 1 hour	Set up	Signs for outside Reg table, ready Refreshments ready Table discussion materials ready Equalities Mon. Box ready
10.00 – 10.30 30 mins	Registration	Welcome folk. People know how crèche works People allocated interpreters Photo permissions info rcvd People get info on NS in own languages & EMon. form
10.30 – 10.40 10 mins	Welcome/ Housekeeping/ Intro – TF (community rep) What the Equalities Gatherings are Aims of Equalities Gatherings Good and safe communication today	People informed about whole project People informed about Aims People aware of conduct and values
10.40 – 10.50 10 mins	Presentation – RM (community rep)	People learn about working group's responses on health and wellbeing and are inspired for following conversations
10.50 – 11.05 10 mins + 5 mins set up	Presentation – New Scots	People understand key NS actions on Employment and Welfare
11.10 – 11.20 10 mins	Instructions for table groups Time for people to move to tables	People hopefully seated OK!
11.20 – 1.00 1 hour 40 50 mins – 1 obj 50 mins – 2nd obj	Discussion 4 tables Could change depending on numbers/ interest of themes	People get their views about employability & welfare heard and recorded People make recommendations/respond to New Scots
1.00 – 2.00 1 hour	LUNCH + Collation of small group discussions – prep key points on Powerpoint + Services reps prepare their info & set up	Summary of feedback ready for 2pm Services rep clear on role
2.00 – 2.10 10 mins	Summary Key points raised from AM discussions	People understand key points People know that New Scots will take points and feed back at a future event

Section 2

Event Agenda continued

Time	Activity	Outcome
2.10 – 3.10pm 1 hour	Services information discussions Input from agency for 20 mins, move round 3 times	People informed about purpose of various education and equalities services People know how to access them/know how to help others access them
3.10 – 3.30pm 20 mins	Evaluation	Welcome folk. People know how crèche works People allocated interpreters Photo permissions info rcvd People get info on NS in own languages & EMon. form
3.30 – 4pm 30 mins	Tidy Up	People informed about whole project People informed about Aims People aware of conduct and values

Section 3

Attendees

Total number of attendees

35 (23 refugee community members)

Identify organisations attending in an official capacity

- Volunteer Glasgow
- Bridges Programme
- Voices Network
- Scottish Refugee Council

Identify 'groups' contributing to the event

Two independent childminders, caterers, three interpreters

Identify refugee groups from geographic areas

Glasgow

“It was really great to have people talk about volunteering and how people can make their skills better to be able to access jobs.”

Section 4

Event Reporting

At registration: copies of the following were handed to attendees: New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy summary available in different languages; 'easy read' versions we had created of Employability & Welfare objectives; copies of the guidelines for communicating at the event in English, French and Arabic (translations by refugee working group members), agendas.

The Equalities Gathering on Employability and Welfare aimed to:

- Bring together refugee representatives to identify and analyse their collective issues and priorities for change for employability and welfare
- Bring together refugees and other third sector/ community organisations to learn from each other's experiences and explore possibilities for working together.
- Enable equalities groups to meet and get to know policy makers and service providers involved the New Scots Integration Strategy.

Summary of the outcomes decided by the refugee working group (members all represent one or more equality group) who co-designed the format and agenda for the Gatherings:

- Learn what New Scots Strategy is and what it is doing.
- Speak up and get my opinions heard and understood.
- Meet people and make new connections.
- Get useful information and services.
- Feel welcomed and respected.

T.H. from the Equalities Gatherings refugee working group opened the event. He gave housekeeping information, presented the background to the Equalities Gatherings project, explained the purpose of the event and presented the guidelines for communicating positively and safely that the working group had developed.

R.M. from the refugee working group then gave a presentation that summarised the working group's positions on employability and welfare. The presentation highlighted the need to support people's mental health and welfare soon after getting status, so that people are in a good place psychologically to engage with employability services and to develop ambitions and skills.

The Head of Services at Scottish Refugee Council, and member of the New Scots Employability and Welfare thematic group, provided an overview of the progress of the Employability and Welfare objectives.

Discussion tables were organised according to equalities groups that people wished to represent: there were tables for women, LGBT people, and older/disabled people. Scottish Refugee Council staff facilitators presented each objective for the Employability and Welfare section in New Scots and asked discussion groups to select up to two of the objectives that interested them the most to discuss:

1. Are these the right actions? If not, why not?
2. Advice you would give New Scots
3. Questions/comments.

After lunch, the Equalities Integration Officer and one of the Regional Integration Coordinators presented a summary of views and recommendations based on our initial reading of people's contributions and recommendations. We informed the participants that once we have fully analysed the emerging themes we will develop a fuller version of recommendations to be shared with New Scots. There will be follow up on this once there is feedback from agencies on this. Following this, The Bridges Programme, Volunteer Glasgow and the Voices Network set up information sessions on their work. Participants moved freely between them for information and discussion.

Section 5

Key messages/outcomes

Objective One

People who are granted refugee status are supported to move on from asylum support. This will be done by ensuring benefits are in place in time.

- Refugee women recommend extending the move-on time period. Many single women who receive status become destitute due to a temporary housing shortage. Other refugee women often support these women, creating overcrowding in their own homes. The immediate housing insecurity and lack of specialised temporary housing for destitute women affects their mental and physical health, making it difficult to engage positively with other move-on actions such as registering for social security and developing education and employment plans. Extending the move-on process would also benefit single mothers and others with children to have enough time to understand properly all their long-term housing options so they can make the right choices.
- Disabled people recommend that the move-on time period is extended (unless social security application process gets a lot quicker). This is to ensure that their first social security payment arrives in time before their asylum support stops. People report having to apply for an advance payment to avoid destitution. The advance payment is then deducted from subsequent regular payments. These reduced payments make it very difficult to manage money, e.g. for people who need to afford higher travel costs due to their physical disability, people with long term health conditions who need to afford a healthy diet; people with diagnosed trauma or other mental illnesses who may already find the move-on process particularly stressful.
- Older people appreciate feedback from other community members about how to access their rights after getting status. Yet local and region-based communities sometimes don't know about older people's rights. They recommend access to more specific advice or peer info sessions that provide them with information before they get status so they can prepare, e.g. which documents do they need to show as evidence they are an older person; at what age are they an older person? Currently

it is hard to find this advice until they get an Scottish Refugee Council appointment (takes time).

- Disabled and older people both recommended that Scottish Refugee Council advice should include dedicated advice time to ensure they know how to access other welfare and employability services once their time with Scottish Refugee Council is finished. They are sometimes not confident about finding work or other opportunities because they are concerned about discrimination based on disability or age.

Most groups opted to discuss the objectives two and three together:

Objective Two

Refugees are able to understand and talk about their skills and competences. This will help them get jobs.

Objective Three

Refugees can build their skills, get jobs and be financially independent.

- People from all equalities groups remarked that the Employability and Welfare rights section in the New Scots Integration Strategy does not include asylum seekers. We request that the Scottish Government and other New Scots agencies recognise the importance for asylum seekers of the need to maintain and develop their employability skills by including asylum seekers in plans to improve employability. This will help reduce asylum seekers' social isolation, reduce their employment gap, and ensure they are better prepared for whatever comes next after they get a decision.
- People from all equalities groups agreed that Scottish Government should clearly demonstrate that they support lifting the ban on the right to work for asylum seekers. The Scottish Government should endorse the campaigns that are working to lift the ban.
- Women, disabled and older people (who are not quite pension age) can feel particularly excluded by current employability or volunteering projects. It can be hard for them to leave the house to participate: disabled and older people can

experience this due to mobility issues. Some women in families have limited chances to get out and improve their English (which is sometimes of a lower level than men) because they often take on most of the parenting responsibilities. Please recognise that agencies need to work with particular groups and not dismiss them as being unsuitable for current opportunities due to physical or mental health and English language barriers. They recommend that agencies invest in employability and volunteering opportunities in which they can participate.

- LGBT, women, and disabled people recommend that employers and employability services develop partnerships with community centres and projects that focus on work with refugees and asylum seekers from their equalities groups. Developing relationships with potential employers will help people regain their confidence in their abilities and potential and provide them with information about the job market. These relationships could also help employers have a better understanding about barriers faced by these groups and good anti-discrimination practice.

LGBT people recommend that potential employers or work placement places develop training and good practice for working with LGBT refugees. They are apprehensive about entering new employment or work placement spaces if they do not know if the workplace culture is welcoming towards both LGBT people and refugees, as they have experienced racism, xenophobia and homophobia simultaneously. They recommend that organisations demonstrate through their inductions, training and organisational values that their workplaces will be safe and welcoming for them.

All equalities groups said they feared or had experienced subtle discrimination from potential employers.

Disabled, older people and women had specific recommendations on volunteering opportunities:

- Create more volunteering opportunities for people who have low levels of English – this helps people to learn useful everyday English 'in action' and develop confidence, skills and social connections.

- Explore evidence or risks of discrimination in volunteering roles in childcare and schools sectors. Some women with good English who wished to build skills in these areas had been dissuaded or refused by employers in these sectors from volunteering opportunities and suggested that anti-Muslim or racist discrimination may have been factors.

Objective Four

Refugees can access services that help people develop their business skills and establish businesses.

Some LGBT people and disabled people identified this objective as a priority as many had been self-employed in their countries of origin. These groups also felt that potential employers frequently discriminated against them (e.g. could not support access needs for physical disabilities), so had a better chance of setting up their own businesses. Their recommendations for designing services to help people develop business skills:

- Support existing small businesses who are trusted by refugee communities to develop networks that will provide mentoring and advice.
- Give space and time to people to develop their ideas.
- Help asylum seekers to access such services so that they have a focus, can build confidence.

Section 6

Staff and volunteer debriefs

What went well?

- People really liked the refugee speakers – both were very engaging and brought energy to the room.
- Participants very engaged and had lots of ideas.
- Lots of time for discussions, not rushed.
- Women's group seemed to have a lot of different experiences in it – managed to cover lots of themes and ideas.
- Participants offered information and support to each other.

What did not go well/what could be done differently?

- One particular community representative arrived late and then was very dominant. Facilitating the group he was in was a challenge because others didn't have room to speak – Remind facilitators to have confidence to go back to the Group Agreement for working comfortably together.
- Still need more engagement from New Scots agencies at the event.

Observation

There were a fair number of asylum seekers present, who noticed that the Employability and Welfare objectives did not seem to include them. Resulted in strong recommendations for this theme to include asylum seekers (backed up by others with refugee status).

“People felt that they were listened to – they felt that they were recognised.”

“Women, disabled and older people can feel particularly excluded by current employability or volunteering projects, they recommend agencies invest in employability and volunteering opportunities in which they can participate.”

Section 7

Attendee Evaluation

We did not use the target evaluation this time (as per recommendation in Equalities Gathering 2 report). We used more targeted questions based on outcomes identified by the refugee working group to try to elicit more specific comments in the feedback.

How well did this event help you to...

Speak up and get my opinions heard and understood

It was helpful for me and I enjoyed being here

I really gained more today. The content was so good and the facilitator very nice

[I could speak about] more opportunities for asylum seekers' jobs and educational facilities

Very helpful. We want more time to support all refugees

The events are improving and getting better

Learn what the New Scots Strategy is and what it is doing

Very interesting and hear new things for me

Great information and good objectives for 1, 2, 4 points

Meet people and make new connections

I had some good meetings today (translated from French)

More people should come (translated from French)

Yes

Get useful information about services

This was definitely very helpful learning about services

Yes

Feel welcomed and respected

Yes

Feedback from an agency

What did you find useful about today's event?

The importance of networking/socialising. It was a great opportunity to be in the programme today as for asylum seekers, it is not always clear how life will be after getting your papers but after listening to R. [community rep] and [The Head of Scottish Refugee Council Services], things were clearer.

What should we do more of?

Speak more about asylum seekers' issues

What did you find particularly interesting about your discussion with people about your organisation?

The employability aspect of volunteering. It was really great to have people talk about volunteering and how people can make their skills better to be able to access jobs. It's really been a pleasure to be here and also to talk about what we offer asylum seekers.

“People got lots of useful info from visiting agencies that they can use straightaway.”

Section 6

Actual Expenditure

Please detail actual expenditure against the budget you produced for the event and highlight any discrepancies.

	Estimated cost	Actual cost
Event: Venue	£300.00	£224.00
Event: Refugee travel	£135.00	£205.80
Event: Catering	£400.00	£420.00
Event: Interpreters	£200.00	£651.50
Event: Childcare	£120.00	£100.00
Refugee prep workshops: Catering	£266.00	£117.00
Refugee prep workshops: Childcare	£90.00	0
Refugee prep workshops: Travel	£184.00	£215.83
Materials/stationery	0	£15.17
Staff travel	0	£42.43
TOTAL		£1661.79



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ACTION FOR REFUGEES