

Entrepreneur training pilots for refugees launched across the UK

Four pilots to encourage refugees to establish businesses have been launched across the UK today.

The pilots are part of a 1 year programme jointly funded by the Home Office and The National Lottery Community Fund, which will be overseen by the Centre for Entrepreneurs (CFE).

The 4 programmes will be based in Bristol, Belfast, the East of England and Staffordshire.

Working directly with refugees and established local businesses, the pilots will deliver tailored start-up programmes that will take refugees from the idea stage to the launch of their business.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

The UK has world leading resettlement programmes which provide sanctuary to thousands of the most vulnerable refugees every year.

It is vital that these refugees are given the best chance to flourish. This project will help them to build businesses and make a real success of their new lives in the UK.

Mark Purvis, Deputy Director England at The National Lottery Community Fund said:

By putting people in the lead and championing entrepreneurship, this project, made possible by National Lottery players, will support refugees to fulfil their potential and thrive.

Centre for Entrepreneurs chairman Oliver Pawle said:

We are grateful for support from the Home Office and The National Lottery Community Fund in helping us realise the vision we set out in our report last year.

The Centre for Entrepreneurs is excited to work with the delivery partners over the coming year to help over 100 refugees into entrepreneurship and to prove that tailored business support strengthens integration.

Offering a good geographical spread across the country, the 4 programmes have

been selected because of their track record in delivering business startup support.

The programmes will be overseen by CFE and a national expert advisory group including representatives from the Home Office and The National Lottery Community Fund, refugee entrepreneurs, and experts from the academic and voluntary sectors.

[ACH](#) will engage with over 100 refugees in Bristol and the West of England. Building on a previous research project, ACH will support refugees new to entrepreneurship; business owners 'just about managing' and looking to strengthen their foundations; and ambitious entrepreneurs looking to scale up.

East Belfast Enterprise will offer those taking part access to professional development sessions, enterprise training, startup bursaries and mentoring support. The pilot will provide support to develop networks within the community, so that even if self-employment is not for them people will have access to further education and other employment opportunities.

Serving the urban centres of Peterborough, Ipswich and Norwich, [MENTA](#) will provide the participating refugees access to workshops, mentoring and peer-to-peer support groups which will be led by local role models. This pilot will primarily target refugees who ran businesses in their home country, developing their expertise for the UK.

The Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce will provide comprehensive support for 40 refugees and will build on extensive experience in business support. Drawing on their networks, Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce will also deliver mentoring support via volunteer entrepreneurs. They will also share the results of the project with the network of 52 accredited Chambers of Commerce across the country.

Refugees in the UK have access to mainstream benefits and services to enable their integration and departments across government are working to ensure services meet their needs. This new pilot will allow refugees to move forward with the process of integration, which was the focus of the government's Integrated Communities Action plan published in February 2019. In the action plan the government committed to increase integration support for all refugees in the UK, with one of the key focuses being employment.

As part of that commitment, the Home Office, in partnership with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organisation for Migration, Business in the Community and the Department for Work and Pensions recently launched 'Tapping Potential' – guidelines for British businesses on employing refugees. The government is also committed to continuing support for the Refugee Employment Network, whose vision is to enable every refugee in the UK to gain appropriate, fulfilling, paid employment or self-employment.

The pilot will cost £360,300; £210,150 will be covered by the Home Office and the remaining £150,150 will be covered by The National Lottery Community

fund. The Centre is working with academic partners to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the pilot so that, if successful, it can be implemented more widely in the future.