



Last updated November 2013

TERMS OF REFERENCE for the Transitions Stakeholders' Advisory Network

Background:

In response to evidence on the employment support needs of refugee professionals in London, Transitions delivered a consultative Pilot from September- December 2010 and in January 2011 started a programme of 1-1 information, advice and guidance, skilled experience, networking and advocacy, a social enterprise recruitment service and a collaborative stakeholders' advisory network.

Transitions' overall aim (mission) is to contribute to a more equitable and diverse London and national labour market, with strong reference to refugee professionals.

Transitions is a social enterprise. It is a Community Interest Company (C.I.C.) There are currently three directors; Sheila Heard (Managing director), Justin Brett (Monitoring & Evaluations director) and Martin James (Financial controls & planning director, former refugee)

Guiding Principles: The network shares the principles that:

- Refugee professionals, as forced migrants, have a legitimate wish to be enabled to restart their career within their professional field of work, after a period of orientation and transition.
- It is in the economic and social interest of the UK to facilitate such professional transitions for skilled people who have been offered a place of safety in the UK.
- It is appropriate for Transitions to advocate to Government agencies for this to happen.

The key aims of the Transitions Social Enterprise are:

- a) To increase the incidence of skilled job outcomes for refugee professionals in London**
- b) To empower refugee professionals**
- c) To enhance statutory body and other decision makers' understanding of the issues relating to refugee employability**
- d) To operate as a sustainable social enterprise**

Definition and participation guidelines for 'Transitions Stakeholders' Advisory Network'

Definition: The network consists of stakeholders who are served or supported by Transitions, or who advise, assist or feedback to Transitions, within its aims. This includes: refugee professionals, refugee advisers, refugee community organisations and agencies, careers practitioners and agencies, employers, placement providers, professional bodies, statutory bodies such as DWP, JCP, UKBA and BIS, and other relevant individuals and organisations.

Participation:

The network currently has over 100 individual and organisational active participants. There is currently no formal 'membership' mechanism, rather it is an active network with triannual meetings & regular email and 1-1 contacts in between. Around 30% (c.5 places) of TSAN meeting places (c 20 participants in total at each meeting) at each triannual (approximately each 3 months) meeting are reserved for refugee professionals to ensure their representation, as key stakeholders. Those refugee places are allocated to clients who have registered with Transitions since the previous meeting, on a first booked first served basis. Refugee speakers are approached according to topic. All 1-1 clients are included in the TSAN mailing list. All participants are invited or self-select according to the theme of each meeting up to a

current maximum of c 20 participants, including speakers. The meeting is attended and facilitated by the Transitions directors, who are part of the network and agree and operate within these terms of reference.

The Task:

The overall aim of the Stakeholders' Advisory Network is to advise, feedback and support the 3 directors of Transitions, in order to find practical solutions to assisting the skilled jobs market to include refugee professionals more. The context is challenging: high refugee unemployment and underemployment, a challenging economic climate, issues around some Coalition and previous Government policies and practices, eg the conditionality of Jobcentre Plus services during skilled voluntary experience, ending the priority status of refugee customers of Jobcentre Plus, the introduction of the new Work programme without specific refugee services and the severe cuts experienced by refugee employment supporting agencies in London.

The advisory network key aims identified on 25th February 2011 at the first network meeting are to advise, feedback and support Transitions on 6 interlinked activities:

- **Taking a citizenship approach** rather than a charity approach:
- **Promoting refugee professionals' employability and spreading awareness and collaboration** between stakeholders of key strategies to overcome barriers. Via:
- **Promoting skilled 3-6 months internships (placements) as an effective, ethical mechanism for enhancing refugee employability**
- **Facilitating Employer Engagement in Transitions social enterprise**
- **Plugging a gap in employment related services to refugee professionals**
- **Sustainable Business Planning, including financial control, quality standards and organisational development**

Timetable and meeting arrangements:

Meetings are held every 4 months. They are facilitated by one of the Transitions directors and usually held at Stockwell Community Resource Centre. Refugee participants are refunded travel costs by Transitions.

Decision making and accountability:

The Transitions directors have overall decision-making and reporting responsibility for Transitions. The directors are informed and advised by the Transitions Stakeholders' Advisory network.

Working practices: The network agrees to:

- Communicate any conflicts of interest
- Communicate collaboratively
- Operate with mutual respect
- Operate within equality and diversity good practice

Review: Transitions aims to review these terms annually. The last review was November 2013.