

**Minutes for Transitions Stakeholders' Advisory Group meeting #2**

**Theme: Work Experience for refugee professionals**

Date: Friday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2011 Time: 2.00 - 4.30

Venue: Stockwell Community Resource Centre, SW4

<http://www.stockwellcommunity.com/content/view/90/124/>

**Present & Apologies:** 22 colleagues present. 15 apologies, who requested minutes.

**Present:** Stellar Chen (A4E, trainee), Chloe Morgan (Refugee Council, Adviser), Shahida Din (A4E Business Manager, Brixton), Stephanie Jones (Refugee Council, Employment Services Co-ordinator), Mebrahtu Woldemariam (Transitions client, Marine Biologist), Veronica Viscardi (Transitions volunteer), Ayele Ago, (Transitions client, Development NGO professional), Eleanor Tomlinson (Manor Gardens, Health Advocacy Project worker), Samuel Negassi (Transitions client, Marine Biologist), Jane Staton (South Bank Centre, HR Manager), Rosie Ward, Metropolitan Housing Refugee Support Project Officer), Fekre Feleke (Transitions client, finance), Abraham Zere (Transitions client, Environmental Scientist), Alan Palmer (JCP, Southwark Partnership Manager), Liz Hooper (JCP Group Partnership Team officer), Beryl Randall (Employability Forum Director), FH (Transitions client, Telecommunications Engineer), Jacky Moran (LASA, employment consultant), Amber Shotton (A4E Partnership manager, London), Bella Kang (A4E trainee)

**Requested minutes:** Dave Atkinson (UKBA, Refugee Integration & Resettlement Unit), Steve Belsey (Transitions steering group member), Evis Bodlli (Shpresa RCO, Director), Justin Brett (Transitions steering group member), Pamela Chambers (DWP Ethnic Minority Employment Policy adviser), Beth Crossland (MRCF Community Empowerment Officer), Dominic Fry (Red Cross, Head of Learning & Development), Daniel Garza (Transitions client, Communications), Belina Gameda (Transitions client, benefits adviser), Dr Ben Gidley (Researcher, ESCR Centre on Migration, Policy & Society, Oxford University), Bryn Parker (Solid Foundations refugee & migrant employment project, Olmec, manager), Louise Salmon (Transitions Steering Group member), Amira Siraj, (Transitions client, accountant), Chris White (JCP Refugee Strategy, Head)

1) **Welcome and introductions.** Short powerpoint presentation by Transitions on objectives/structure/outcomes to date of Transitions

2) **Matters arising:** Draft Terms of Reference:

Small groups discussed existing draft TOR, which guide the Network on advising on 6 interlinked objectives (1. Citizenship approach 2. Promoting refugee employability in a collaborative way (lobbying) 3. Promoting internships 4. Facilitating employer engagement in social enterprise (internships & recruitment), 5. Plugging a gap in refugee professionals' services 6. Sustainable business planning

Comments:

Objective 2: Promoting employability in a collaborative way/lobbying : Include self employment & peer mentoring. Produce a 'client journey' pack and ask AN for feedback. Address labour market shortages as a business strategy (collaborate with other agencies). Consider the line/ between/relationship Between frontline advice and lobbying. .

Objective 4: Employer engagement: Get Local Authority engagement (LAS), invite employers to appropriate themed meetings, clear line between AN and Transitions.

Objective 6. Sustainable business planning. Can use website adverts to generate income.

**Action: Sheila Heard to edit TOR in response to comments and email with minutes.**

**2. JCP draft of updated 'Refugee Customer Journey ' document** Request from Beryl Randall, Employability Forum, for AN feedback on JCP draft of updated 'Refugee Customer Journey ' document, on behalf of working party. **Action: Group to feedback to Transitions by Wed July 6<sup>th</sup> via a SurveyMonkey link Sheila Heard will send. SH will forward feedback to EF.**

**3. Issues/solutions around placements (internships)** Short powerpoint presentation by Sheila Heard on placement issues/solutions. Including refugee professionals' need for orientation, APEL and work experience; mismatch with JCP services which focus on jobsearch & offer conflicting responses to the volunteering entitlement.

➤ **Speakers:**

- Ayele Ago: Refugee professional, NGO manager: short powerpoint presentation. Summarised his 18 years NGO career, Transitions Jobsearch & intern setup support (just completed internship) Transitions peer mentor. JCP services included door supervisor training. Issues include lack of knowledge of system or of services that exists. JCP services not addressing those issues. Suggested enhanced orientation/familiarity/information packs/ ESOL programme
- F H: Refugee professional, telecommunication engineer: short powerpoint presentation. Summarised her recent MSc and previous career. Transitions Jobsearch & internship search. JCP services not addressing issues of need for placement/internship/orientation of how labour market works/ limited understanding of JCP staff of refugee specific barriers (orientation, APEL, need for work experience)
- Liz Hooper: JCP Group Partnership Team Officer: short presentation with handouts (June 2011: Jobcentre Plus – Summer 2011) Greater focus on diagnosing customers' individual needs/more flexibility/increased autonomy for local managers/increased partnership networking. Advisers at initial Work Focused interview encouraged to refer, inc. support through the Flexible Fund. Table of 'Pre Work Programme Offer'. After 13 weeks referred to Work programme. Includes work experience: Work Together.

(Previous weblinks information provided by Liz Hooper and Chris White: Work Clubs/Enterprise Clubs

<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/detail?itemId=1086669634&type=RESOURCES>

Work Together volunteering/work experience programme

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/work-together-lft.pdf>

Summary of key discussion points:

- Refugee engineer observed that his internship has assisted him to become much more aware of similarities/differences in working practices, More confident and able to approach employers now.
- JCP colleague mentioned issue with some JCP customers of volunteering and not actively seeking work. Sheila Heard clarified that she has not in 14 years observed this in the case of refugee professionals. Professionals Work experience is a key step towards employment & not an end in itself.

**Action: Sheila Heard to liaise with Liz Hooper and Chris White to enhance JCP services in London & UK to refugee professionals & support refugees' engagement with Transitions. SH investigate further Work Together programme. AN Case studies/suggestions please send to SH who will forward to LH & CW.**

**Attachments sent with minutes:**

Transitions presentation, updated TOR, Presentations by 3 speakers

**Date, venue & theme of next meeting: Friday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2-5pm Stockwell Community Resource Centre. Theme: Transitions services for employers & employer engagement**