REFUGEE EMPLOYMENT NETWORK

Unlocking the UK's Refugee Talent

Our impact in 2025-26





Hamed Amiri, Tech Business Partner | Tech Catalyst , PWC UK, Refugee and bestselling author of The Boy with Two Hearts and The Other Boy

“Access to meaningful work gives refugees far more than a job; it offers dignity, purpose, and the chance to rebuild a life. I know this personally.”

Inside this report

Welcome	4
Impact at a glance	5
Connecting refugees with employment opportunities	10
Strengthening the refugee employment ecosystem	15
Creating inclusive workplaces, industries and policies	18
Finances & future ambitions	23

From our chair



Janice Lopatkin MBE, Chair of the Board of Trustees

When we founded the Refugee Employment Network (REN), our ambition was to unite organisations committed to improving job opportunities for refugees across the UK. So, seeing that idea grow into an independent charity and a 400-member national network has been immensely rewarding.

Finding suitable, sustainable work is vital to rebuilding a life in a new country. It allows refugees to support their families, contribute to their communities, and use their skills. Yet refugees remain three times more likely to be unemployed than people born in the UK

REN connects the exceptional work happening across sectors, highlighting effective practices and addressing gaps so refugees can access support anywhere in the UK. Over the past year, we have entered an exciting new phase - strengthening our governance, securing long-term funding, expanding industry partnerships, and delivering ambitious programmes.

A personal highlight was our Refugee Jobs Fair at St James's's Palace, attended by His Majesty The King. The event connected more than 500 refugees directly with employers, with candidates going on to secure job offers from a wide range of sectors including marketing, healthcare and data analysis. It's also been wonderful to see the strength of REN's employer partnerships, including the development of our work with Aon and our continuing partnership with EY. This impact report - our very first - reflects what our collective effort has achieved, proving that being forced to flee your home country does not mean losing your potential.

As you'll see from the following pages, this wouldn't be possible without our members, partners, funders, staff, and the displaced professionals shaping our work. I'd also like to thank our Trustee Board for their commitment and guidance, and warmly welcome Chris Fitzgerald LVO, Hoa Ngo and Souleiman Lazrak, who joined the Board this year. Together, we're unlocking talent and supporting refugees to rebuild their lives.

704

displaced people participated in REN-convened job fairs, mentoring and employability programmes

112

employers and refugee support organisations connected directly with refugee talent



1 in 3

candidates at the St James's' Palace Refugee jobs fair secured an interview within three months of the event

...and

21

job fair attendees were offered a job!

36k

refugees and displaced people reached by our members

(Based on voluntary, self-reported member data, this figure represents the combined reach of REN's membership, rather than people directly supported by REN)

40%

of employers who attended the St James's's Palace Refugee Jobs Fair adapted or explored adapting their recruitment processes to be more inclusive of refugee talent

404

members in our UK-wide network, welcoming **54 new organisations** in 2025–26.

97%

of REN members feel part of a wider community advancing refugee employment

143

jobs advertised by **67 employers** through REN's Jobs Board

50

organisations convened to contribute to the Home Office's consultation on the Earned Settlement Proposals

Rebuilding a life in a new country is tough. We make rebuilding a career easier.

At the Refugee Employment Network (REN), our mission is to ensure every refugee across the UK can access appropriate, fulfilling and paid employment. As the UK's only national network dedicated exclusively to refugee employment, REN brings together over 400 member organisations across all four nations. Our cross-sector network spans employers, refugee charities, local authorities, training providers, and industry bodies - working collectively to improve employment outcomes at scale.



Refugees bring valuable skills, qualifications and professional experience to the UK, but too many face persistent barriers to finding suitable and sustainable work:

Only
24% of refugees are employed in their first year, peaking at 48% after 8 years (far below the UK average of 74%)[1]

81% earn less than £30,000 after eight years[2], despite half holding A-level equivalent or higher qualifications[3]

20% of London businesses report difficulty finding qualified refugee candidates or knowing how to recruit them.[4]

1 Refugee Integration Outcomes (RIO) Home Office
2 Refugee Integration Outcomes (RIO) Home Office
3 Commission on the Integration of Refugees
4 London Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Anna's story



I'm a Mechanical Engineer from Ukraine with a Master's degree and 13 years of professional experience. When the invasion made my hometown unsafe, I fled to the UK. Finding work that matched my skills felt impossible. Despite applying for professional roles, I received constant rejections and ended up on a zero-hours contract at a sports shop.

When an advisor introduced me to REN's six-month mentoring scheme, things began to turn around. My mentor helped me overhaul my CV, and I immediately began receiving responses. Low self-confidence had been my biggest barrier - I knew I could do the work, but I struggled to present my value. My mentor taught me how to articulate my soft skills and recognise my worth.

For my current role, I faced a rigorous process: a soft-skills interview, a technical test, and a final technical assessment. REN helped me prepare by providing mock interviews and language support, and I was thrilled to be offered a job as an engineer with a supportive British business.

Engineering has been my passion since childhood. Constantly applying without success was demoralising, but REN helped me persevere. Now, the weight of worry has lifted, and I feel calm, settled, and motivated.

The mentoring programme helped me realise that all the experience I had before truly matters and has value. It gave me the confidence to believe in myself and my abilities.

How we create change

1

We connect refugees with employment opportunities

We connect refugee talent to jobs, employment support and development opportunities, and employers to a highly-skilled workforce.

2

We strengthen the refugee employment ecosystem

We convene employers, charities, local authorities, and industry bodies to join up employment pathways, share expertise, and build collaborative solutions.

3

We create more inclusive workplaces, industries and policies for refugees

We partner with employers to make recruitment practices more inclusive and use the collective voice of our network to advocate with policymakers to remove structural barriers to work.

Experts by experience



REN intentionally involves experts by experience in designing and delivering our work. We recognise both the expertise gained through forced displacement and navigating the UK labour market, and the professional knowledge and skills people bring.

People contribute professional expertise as HR leaders, recruiters, digital specialists, project managers, lecturers and employment advisers, as well as insights gained through forced displacement and navigating the UK labour market. We create opportunities for people to contribute both forms of expertise, while respecting whether, when and how they choose to share their personal experiences.

Rather than separating experts by experience into a standalone group, we involve people alongside other specialists as advisers, facilitators, trustees and partners. Here's how we put that expertise into practice:

- **Paid expertise:** We pay experts by experience for their time, knowledge and the expertise they contribute to our advisory groups, speaking at events and facilitating training.

  Co-develop our work: Displaced professionals helped build and co-facilitate our Unlocking Refugee Talent training, and serve on our Digital Advisory Group for the Refugee Employment Marketplace.

- **Inclusive hiring:** We reviewed REN's own recruitment practices alongside Experts by Experience employment initiative to make our practices more inclusive of refugees and displaced people. People with refugee backgrounds are represented throughout the organisation, from our staff to trustees and advisory groups.

Meaningful involvement requires time, capacity and appropriate payment. With more funding, we aim to embed lived and professional expertise even further into REN's strategy, leadership, and daily work.

1. Connecting refugees with employment opportunities

Refugee talent jobs fairs

This year, REN connected 704 refugees and displaced people with 112 employers, employment opportunities and employability support, helping them progress on their journeys towards employment.

REN's model is built on the collective reach of our national network. We connect employers and opportunities with trusted organisations already supporting refugees in their communities. Our members, including refugee charities, local authorities and strategic migration partnerships, collectively reach up to 36,060 refugees and displaced people across the UK. This enables jobs, programmes and employment support to be shared at scale across different regions and communities.

Building regional connections in Newcastle

Working with Newcastle City Council and a regional steering group of REN members, we integrated a dedicated Displaced Talent Hour into the council's established annual Careers Fair.

The event connected 102 refugees with 49 businesses offering live vacancies, seven council departments and 26 employment-support providers. The dedicated hour provided a quieter space for candidates to speak directly with employers and introduced businesses that might not ordinarily attend a refugee-focused event to local refugee talent and specialist support organisations. The event demonstrated REN's model in action: convening local expertise, strengthening existing provision and creating local connections that continue beyond the event itself.

Refugee Jobs Fair at St James's' Palace

In February 2026, REN partnered with the Royal Household and World Jewish Relief to deliver a landmark refugee Jobs Fair at St James's' Palace.

Supported by a visit from His Majesty The King, the event connected 590 displaced professionals across 44 countries with 29 major employers and industry bodies - including EY, HSBC, BBC Studios, Octopus Energy, PwC, and Barts Health NHS Trust. Beyond direct access to recruiters from a range of sectors including financial services, green energy and health care and 1-to-1 CV clinics, the fair drove immediate momentum and long-term hiring shifts.

Candidates also secured volunteering roles - including with the Royal Ballet & Opera House - to build local experience and bridge CV gaps.

The event proved the power of cross-sector collaboration - not just in landing immediate jobs, but in building sustainable, inclusive recruitment pathways.

- **83%** of employers reported a positive shift in their perception of refugee talent
- **63%** added 20 or more candidates directly into their hiring pipelines
- **40%** actively introduced or explored more inclusive hiring practices

HSBC strengthened its refugee-inclusive onboarding processes, while Barts Health NHS Trust progressed 6 candidates into pre-employment pathways, offering access to NHS vacancies and placements.

"Speaking directly to the attendees helped me better understand the resilience, skills,and determination that refugees bring to the workforce." Employer

Three months later:

- **91%** of candidates submitted job applications
- **33%** secured interviews, with 21 people receiving job offers
- **70%** felt more confident in their job search

"For a senior professional with 20+ years of experience, being able to discuss my specific technical background face-to-face was much more effective than a standard online application"

Refugee candidate





Mentoring

Refugee Engineering Mentoring Programme

This year, REN partnered with the Engineering Council and the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) to pilot the Refugee Engineering Mentoring Programme.

The initiative matches displaced engineers with mentors in equivalent disciplines to help them navigate UK engineering pathways, tailor their CVs, and rebuild professional confidence.

The programme's mentoring model was shaped directly by the mentees. They told us they wanted mentors who were active in their profession, working in the same discipline and familiar with current recruitment practices. This insight informed how REN and our partners recruited mentors and made the matches.

Eight refugee engineers who were unemployed or working outside of the engineering sector, were matched with mentors, who were members of the Institution of Civil Engineers. Importantly, the mentors worked in equivalent roles or disciplines to their mentees. Matching peer-to-peer by specialism, seniority and industry background meant mentees received support relevant to their career goals and professional experience.

The pilot also drove mutual value and systemic, industry-wide change:

- **83%** of mentors reported a stronger connection to their professional purpose
- **100%** of mentors gained high awareness of the barriers refugees face in finding employment in the UK by the end of the programme

By pairing specialist mentoring with institutional backing, the programme provides a scalable model to unlock skilled talent, lower barriers to entering the profession and drive industry-level change, while helping to bridge severe engineering shortages across the UK.

Within six months:

- **50%** of mentees had secured employment in engineering
- **63%** gained professional membership to the ICE professional network
- **50%** started or completed further engineering qualifications

"My mentor helped me revise my CV. As a result, I received a job offer in my field at a very good company."

Mentee

Refugee Employment Marketplace

REN is UK partner of the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) for its European Refugee Employment Platform. This year, 67 employers shared 143 vacancies through REN's existing Jobs Board, connecting refugee talent with opportunities across the UK.

With support from the Welsh Government, we completed the discovery and planning phase for a new Refugee Employment Marketplace.

We established a Digital Advisory Group bringing together displaced professionals, employers, digital experts and jobs-board specialists, and co-designed the development brief around their needs for digital infrastructure that will connect employers with refugee talent, make employment opportunities and support easier to navigate, and strengthen REN's ability to improve and track employment outcomes at scale.



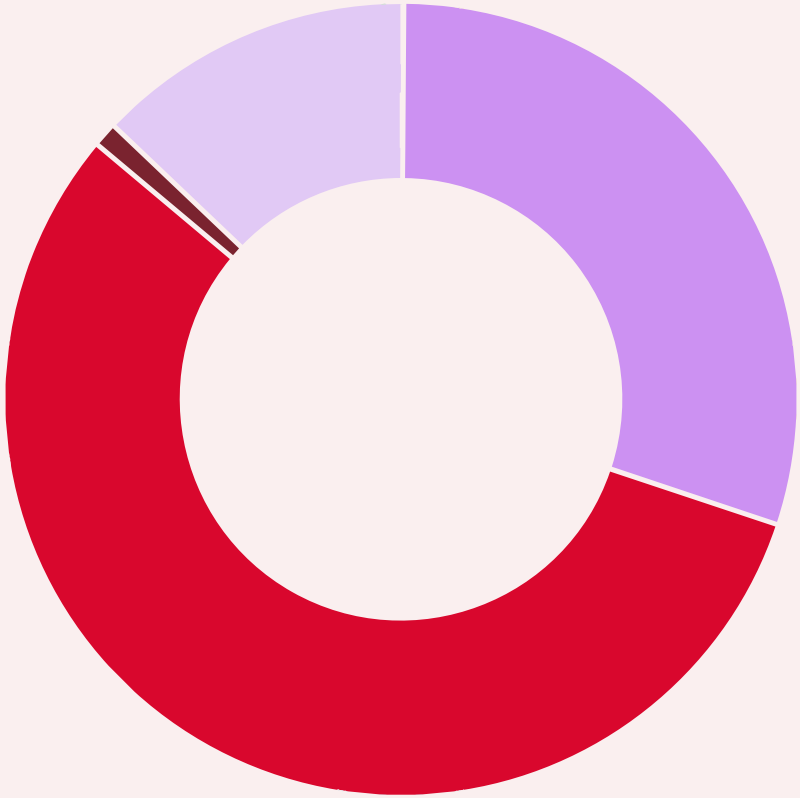
2. Strengthening the refugee employment ecosystem

An engaged national network

This year, our network grew by 12% to 404 registered members, with 54 new registrants joining. New members included Octopus Energy, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Newcastle City Council, Suffolk Refugee Support, DGP PLC and Migrant Help.

We also created more opportunities for members to connect and collaborate. Our new online REN Connect series brings members together to explore specific employment challenges, share experience and identify practical solutions.

Over three sessions, we engaged 170 people, covering work experience for displaced professionals, the Government's new proposals for Earned Settlement, and developments across the network.



Network composition

- 56% employers
- 30% refugee charities and support organisations
- 13% local authorities
- 1% other

Refugee employment summit

Our annual Refugee Employment Summit is the centrepiece of REN's convening work. It brings employers, displaced professionals, charities, local authorities and funders together for a day of learning, discussion and collaboration focused on advancing refugee employment. Participants explore emerging trends, research and evidence, share successful interventions and develop collective responses to common challenges.

Hosted by EY during Refugee Week in June 2025, the Summit convened 83 people from across the refugee employment ecosystem.

Following the event:

- **81%** better understood the barriers refugees face in accessing employment.
- **84%** better understood how their organisation could become more inclusive of refugee talent.
- **100%** were inspired to take further action to support refugee employment.

"As a small organisation, we often work in isolation, but the Summit gave me new connections, fresh perspectives and the confidence to reach out and build partnerships."

Betty Berthebaud, Director of the Community Lab Initiative CIC



97% of REN members feel part of a wider community advancing refugee employment

3. Creating inclusive workplaces, industries and policies

Inclusion schemes

To bridge the gap between employers and refugee talent, REN launched two targeted initiatives this year:

Unlocking Refugee Talent Training

Hosted by professional services firm Aon in March 2026, REN launched a new training programme co-developed with UNHCR and five experts by experience, who'll be paid to co-facilitate its delivery. Alongside their experience of forced displacement and finding work in the UK, they bring professional expertise in HR, recruitment and employment support. The sessions give HR, talent and hiring managers practical guidance about refugees' right to work, the barriers displaced people face and the changes organisations can make to recruit and support refugee talent in the workplace.

"I didn't know hiring refugees was legal." Hiring Manager

Aon Displaced Workforce Impact Programme

Through a new headline partnership with Aon, REN delivered a two-cohort programme for 78 displaced professionals rebuilding careers in finance, law, risk, tech, and professional services. Despite 94% having previous corporate experience, 77% were unemployed entering the programme. We brought them together for three days of intensive workplace immersion, 1-to-1 CV support, and networking with Aon employees to help them learn about the UK insurance and professional services markets.

The impact of the DWIP programme went both ways. Aon colleagues gained direct access to an overlooked pipeline, leading to direct hires and plans to scale the model across Aon's European business.

Over three days:

- Interview confidence jumped by over **40 percentage points.**
- Understanding of the UK job market surged from **11%** to **75%**
- Confidence applying for corporate roles more than doubled to over **70%.**
- In the January cohort, understanding of the UK job market increased from **11%** to **75%**, while confidence in professional networking rose from **8%** to **63%.**



“Those involved were struck by the talent, ambition and professionalism of the participants. These are skilled, resilient and highly motivated individuals who represent an overlooked source of talent for businesses.”

Tracy-Lee Kus, Co-CEO, Aon EMEA

“It opened my eyes to the possibilities within the corporate finance and insurance sectors and helped rebuild my confidence.”

Programme participant

Yuliia's story



"It's given me stability, confidence and security for the future"

Yuliia joined the Aon Displaced Workforce Impact Programme with a Master's degree and 15 years' experience as a market analyst. Fleeing to the UK, she struggled to secure a role matching her background due to language barriers, unrecognised qualifications, and a lack of professional networks.

"We arrived in a new country completely unprepared, with no local network to rely on," Yuliia says. "Programmes like this provide essential support, help us navigate the job market, and allow us to start building connections." After joining Aon's programme in October 2025, Yuliia received CV guidance from their talent team, applied for open roles, and successfully interviewed. She is now employed at Aon as a Research and Consulting Associate in its Strategy & Technology Group.

"It's given me stability, confidence, and security for the future," she shares. Her message to employers: "Displaced talent brings fresh perspectives, new approaches, and immense motivation."

Convening our network on changes affecting refugee employment

The Government's Earned Settlement proposals, in the Immigration and Asylum Bill could significantly affect displaced people's employment, progression and security, as well as employers' workforce planning.

In response, REN brought together 50 members from across the UK, including employers, refugee organisations, industry bodies and local authorities, to examine these implications with experts in immigration law and migration policy.

We consulted members to understand how the proposals could affect displaced people, employers and frontline services and the wider industries and sectors. We used this evidence to produce a briefing explaining the implications for refugee employment and supporting members to develop informed consultation responses, as well as submitting REN's consultation response informed by our members.

By bringing together different perspectives and translating complex policy into practical implications, REN helped members understand the proposals and respond with greater confidence.

4. Our finances & future ambitions

Finances

1

We tripled our income to £217,656

Providing the resources to sustainably grow REN's team, programmes and impact.

2

We secured five multi-year grants

Strengthening REN's financial resilience and enabling us to plan and invest for the longer term.

3

We invested in REN's infrastructure

Building REN's organisational capacity, with the addition of a full time member of staff and the discovery and development phase of the Refugee Employment Marketplace, digital infrastructure that will connect displaced talent, employers and employment support at scale.

Financial review

2025–2026 was a year of significant financial growth for REN. We tripled our total income in one year, increasing from £63,422 to £217,656. This growth was driven primarily by successful trust and foundation fundraising, and increased corporate partnership income and donations.

REN secured valuable multi-year support from funders including This Day Foundation, Postcode Society Trust, the Rayne Foundation, the Hilden Charitable Fund and the King Charles III Charitable Fund. This longer-term investment provides greater stability and enables REN to plan beyond individual projects, invest in organisational capacity and develop partnerships and programmes with the potential to achieve more impact at scale. Our expanded headline partnership with Aon also demonstrates growing corporate investment in REN's mission.

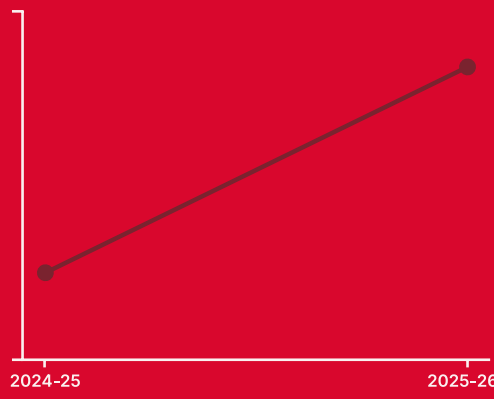
Expenditure increased to £188,607 as REN invested in staffing, programme delivery, stakeholder engagement and major initiatives including the Refugee Jobs Fair at St James's's Palace, Refugee Employment Marketplace and Refugee Employment Training. REN ended the year with a surplus of £29,048.

Unrestricted reserves sit at £90,168, representing approximately five months of operating costs and remaining within REN's reserves policy target of three to six months. Restricted funds of £81,609 reflect grants received for activity scheduled for delivery in 2026–2027.

Alongside income growth, two years of organisational development support from the Lloyds Bank Foundation have helped REN strengthen our financial resilience and governance, with improved financial controls and reporting as well as the development of a business and product plan focused on developing sustainable income streams through mission-aligned services and products. Together, these developments have strengthened REN's financial resilience and created a more stable foundation for long-term impact.

£217,656

*REN total income 2025-26
(Income for 2024-25: £63,422)



Looking ahead

Our priorities for 2026–27

We enter the next year in a difficult and rapidly changing political, social and economic environment. Our response will remain grounded in what we know: meaningful employment creates financial security, confidence, inclusion and belonging. Employers benefit from refugee talent and lasting change requires coordinated action.

If employment becomes increasingly central to settlement in the UK, REN's mission is more vital than ever. We must continue scaling our reach and impact, ensuring refugees across the UK can access the support, networks, mentors, and employers needed to secure suitable and sustainable paid work.

Launch the Refugee Employment Marketplace

We'll launch the Refugee Employment Marketplace as the UK's centralised digital hub for refugee employment. It will connect displaced people with employment guidance, live vacancies and local support, while enabling employers to share opportunities with a national refugee talent pipeline.

Strengthen industry partnerships

We'll build on our work in engineering and financial and professional services, while developing partnerships in new sectors. Working with more employers and professional industry bodies, we will remove or lower systemic barriers and create scalable pathways that accelerate displaced professionals' return to careers reflecting their skills and experience.

Build REN's expert by experience approach

We'll strengthen how experts by experience inform REN's strategy, governance and programme development. Subject to funding, we'll create more consistent, paid opportunities for people with experience of forced displacement to advise, challenge and shape our work, while continuing to recognise and value the professional expertise and wider identities people bring.

Expand refugee-inclusive workplaces

We'll roll out our Unlocking Refugee Talent training to HR, talent and hiring professionals, helping employers understand the barriers refugees face and develop more inclusive recruitment and workplace practices.

Grow REN sustainably

This year, we focused on building strong, stable foundations for REN. With organisational development support from Lloyds Bank Foundation, we are working with consultants to refine our Theory of Change and develop a stronger monitoring, evaluation and KPI framework. We will continue to grow responsibly by investing in key staff, digital infrastructure and impact tracking, while seeking multi-year funding, expanding corporate partnerships and developing paid services to support REN's long-term sustainability. These steps will give us the capacity to scale our work and deliver lasting, UK-wide impact

Strengthen our national network

We'll deepen member engagement and collaboration across employers, charities, local authorities, industry bodies and displaced professionals. By connecting knowledge, evidence and opportunities, we'll support more joined-up employment pathways and strengthen the collective voice of the network.

Support or partner with REN

If you would like to support our work or explore partnering with REN, please contact our Chief Executive, Jenny Walton:

hello@refugeeemploymentnetwork.org

or visit our website to find out more about our work

refugeeemploymentnetwork.org

From our CEO



Jenny Walton, CEO, Refugee Employment Network

Most of us want similar things in life: a safe place to call home, a secure future for our families, and meaningful work that allows us to take care of them. My family were refugees, so this mission is deeply personal to me. I know the impact of being forced to flee and rebuild a life can be felt across generations. But it should not take generations to rebuild a life and career. I am impatient about that, but also hopeful that we can do better.

Refugees bring valuable skills, qualifications and professional experience to the UK, but too many face persistent barriers to finding suitable and sustainable work.Half of the displaced people in the UK hold qualifications equivalent to A-levels or above, and nearly a quarter hold a Master's degree or higher. Connecting this population to the labour market addresses severe skills shortages, restores dignity, rebuilds lives, and strengthens the broader economy.
REN stays focused on practical, high-impact solutions. This year, we directly connected 704 displaced people with employers, jobs and dedicated support. And behind the scenes, we've strengthened our own foundations - tripling our income and securing multi-year funding to expand our national infrastructure.

Employment is central to successful economic and social inclusion in the UK. The talent is there. The opportunities are there. Our job is to connect them, and to do so at scale.

We're immensely proud of what we've achieved together. Our heartfelt thanks go to our Board of Trustees for their expertise, commitment and guidance throughout the year, and to our 400+ REN members, funders and industry partners who believe in our work and are strengthening their commitment to refugee employment at a time when it is more vital than ever.

Above all, we thank the displaced professionals across the UK whose lived experiences, expertise and ambition continue to drive and shape our mission.

We cannot do this alone. Lasting change requires collective action, and I look forward to continuing this work with you.

Thank you

Our Board of Trustees

Janice Lopatkin, Chair
Charlie Fraser
Chris Fitzgerald LVO
Elizabeth Bowles
Nour Talli
Sally Bailey
Souleiman Lazrak, Treasurer
Viet Hoa Ngo

Our funders

Hilden Charitable Fund
King Charles III Charitable Fund
Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales
Postcode Society Trust
The Rayne Foundation
This Day Foundation
Welsh Government
World Jewish Relief

Our partners

Aon
Engineering Council
EY
Institution of Civil Engineers
The Royal Household
Welsh Strategic Migration Partnership

Our Digital Advisory Group

Daria Petrakovska
Finn McKendrick
Gunarjun Chawla
Hannah Lawler
Hamed Amiri
Jeniffer Jeyason
Mike Convey
Oduayo Comfort Adeyemi
Rob Janke

Unlock talent.
Employ refugees.
Rebuild lives.



REFUGEE EMPLOYMENT NETWORK

Registered Charity Number: 1196168

REFUGEE EMPLOYMENT NETWORK

TRUSTEES REPORT AND
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

Registered charity number 1196168

Contents

Trustees report [pages 3 – 10]
Objectives and activities
Achievements and performance
Financial review
Reference and administration details
Structure governance and management
Other optional information
Statement of trustees responsibilities
Declaration

Accompanying Financial Statements

Independent Examiner's Report [page 11]
Receipts and Payments Account [pages 12-14]

Refugee Employment Network

Trustees report for the year ended 31 March 2026

The trustees present their report and the accompanying financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2026, covering the period from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

Objectives and Activities

Aims and Objectives

The objects of the Refugee Employment Network CIO as set out in our governing document:

1. The relief of unemployment of those granted refugee status and, to the extent such individuals are permitted to work in the United Kingdom, those seeking asylum in the United Kingdom, by:

(a) the provision of effective vocational and skills training, advice and support, both to beneficiaries and, more commonly, the third parties with which they come into contact, including without limitation local authorities, central government departments, non-governmental organisations, prospective employers and charities;

(b) the provision of advice and guidance to employers seeking to train and recruit refugees or, to the extent legally permissible, those seeking asylum in the United Kingdom; and

(c) the dissemination, to local authorities, central government departments, non-governmental organisations, prospective employers, charities and any other relevant organisation, of guidance and best practice regarding employment and self-employment as they affect refugees and those seeking asylum;

2. to advance the education and training of those (a) granted refugee status, and (b) seeking asylum, and in each case their dependants, so as to advance them in life and enable them to adapt and thrive within a new community;
3. to advance the education of employers and the general public around issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum, in order to better enable refugees and those seeking asylum to build their lives in the United Kingdom; and
4. to relieve financial hardship amongst those granted refugee status and, to the extent such individuals are permitted to work in the United Kingdom, those seeking asylum in the United Kingdom, particularly by the provision of legal and practical advice and guidance relating to employment and self-employment, in each case for the public benefit.

Main Activities

At the Refugee Employment Network, it's our mission to ensure that all refugees can access appropriate, fulfilling and paid employment in the UK.

The Refugee Employment Network (REN) is the UK's only national network dedicated exclusively to refugee employment. With a growing network of almost 400 members across all four UK nations, REN is uniting a national community committed to creating opportunities for refugees, spanning a wide range of industries and professions. Our work meets both immediate and long-term needs, ensuring comprehensive support for refugees and employers through each stage of employment.

We connect refugees to job opportunities
Our Jobs Board, mentoring programmes, and job fairs connect refugees directly with employers and employment opportunities, and employers to refugee talent.

We strengthen the refugee employment ecosystem
Our network includes businesses, local authorities, and refugee charities, working together to advance refugee employment through joint initiatives and sharing best practice.

We advance research and policy reform
We collaborate with businesses, government and policy makers to advance refugee employment rights in the UK.

Delivering public benefit through our work
Employment enables refugees to rebuild their lives, contribute to their local communities, and achieve financial independence, which reduces their reliance on public resources. By helping refugees integrate into the workforce, REN strengthens societal cohesion and contributes to addressing critical labour shortages. These benefits extend beyond individuals to employers, local communities, and the UK economy.

Our network of 400+ members, including businesses, local authorities, and refugee charities, ensures that our impact reaches a wide cross-section of society. The main activities undertaken for the public benefits include:

- Enabling refugees to participate fully in society as active contributors to the economy.
- Fostering greater inclusion and diversity in workplaces across industries.
- Advancing the broader public interest by reducing unemployment and underemployment among refugees.

REN connects refugee talent with employers, employment support and opportunities through its jobs board, mentoring programmes and jobs fairs. We convene network members through meetings, newsletters, shared learning and the annual Refugee Employment Summit, supporting collaborative initiatives across sectors and regions. We also provide employers with practical guidance on inclusive recruitment and workplace practices and share evidence and case studies to improve public understanding.

Public Benefit

Our work supports refugees to rebuild their careers, use their skills and participate fully in society. By addressing unemployment and underemployment and improving access to suitable work, REN supports economic inclusion and community cohesion, while enabling employers to benefit from a wider range of talent.

The Trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when reviewing the Charity's aims and objectives and in planning its activities. The Trustees have specifically considered how the Charity’s activities deliver identifiable public benefit in line with its purposes.

Contribution Made by Volunteers

REN was supported by volunteers from EY, to plan and deliver the Jobs Fair at St James's Palace, as well as members of our Digital Advisory Board (excluding people who also bring expertise by experience who are paid for their participation). We have also been supported by volunteers who joined the Jobs Fair at St James's Palace providing 121 CV and interview advice.

Achievements and Performance

Main Achievements

Non-Financial Achievement

Unlocking Access to Opportunities

During 2025/26, 704 displaced people participated in REN-convened jobs fairs, mentoring and employability programmes. REN connected 112 employers and refugee-support organisations directly with qualified refugee talent, while 67 employers advertised 143 vacancies through REN's Jobs Board. Within three months of the St James's Palace Refugee Jobs Fair, one in three candidates responding to the follow-up survey had secured an interview and 21 people had received job offers.

Strengthening the Refugee Employment Ecosystem

REN's UK-wide network grew by 12% to 404 registered members, with 54 new organisations joining during the year. Together, members reported working with 36,060 refugees and displaced people, demonstrating the scale and reach of the network. The Refugee Employment Summit brought together 83 people to share evidence, build relationships and develop practical responses to barriers in refugee employment, with 97% of Summit delegates saying they felt part of a wider community advancing refugee employment.

Creating Inclusive Workplaces and Policies

Following the St James's Palace Refugee Jobs Fair, 40% of participating employers reported that they had introduced, or were exploring, changes to make their recruitment processes more inclusive of refugee talent.

REN also helped displaced professionals rebuild their careers through specialist programmes. Its engineering mentoring pilot, delivered with the Engineering Council and the Institution of Civil Engineers, matched eight refugee engineers with mentors working in equivalent disciplines. Two cohorts of the Aon Displaced Workforce Impact Programme supported 78 displaced professionals with experience in finance, law, risk, technology and professional services. Participants reported substantial increases in their understanding of the UK job market and confidence applying for corporate roles.

REN also convened 50 employers, refugee organisations and local authorities to consider the Government's Earned Settlement proposals. Their evidence informed REN's consultation response and helped members understand and respond to the potential implications for refugee employment.

Financial Performance

2025–2026 was a year of significant financial growth for REN. We tripled our total income in one year, increasing from **£63,422 to £217,656**. This growth was driven primarily by successful trust and foundation fundraising and increased corporate partnership income and donations.

REN secured valuable multi-year support from funders including This Day Foundation, Postcode Society Trust, the Rayne Foundation, the Hilden Charitable Fund and the King Charles III Charitable Fund. This longer-term investment provides greater stability and enables REN to plan beyond individual projects, invest in organisational capacity and develop partnerships and programmes with the potential to achieve

more impact at scale. Our expanded headline partnership with Aon also demonstrates growing corporate investment in REN's mission.

Expenditure increased to **£188,607** as REN invested in staffing, programme delivery, stakeholder engagement and major initiatives including the Refugee Jobs Fair at St James's Palace, Refugee Employment Marketplace and Refugee Employment Training. REN ended the year with a **surplus of £27,394**.

Unrestricted reserves sit at **£90,168**, representing approximately five months of operating costs and remaining within REN's reserves policy target of three to six months. Restricted funds of **£81,609** reflect grants received for activity scheduled for delivery in 2026–2027.

Alongside income growth, two years of organisational development support from the Lloyds Bank Foundation have helped REN strengthen our financial resilience and governance, with improved financial controls and reporting as well as the development of a business and product plan focused on diversifying our income through mission-aligned services and products. Together, these developments have strengthened REN's financial resilience and created a more stable foundation for long-term impact.

Appreciation

The trustees thank REN's members, funders, partners, staff and volunteers for their commitment, expertise and support, and the displaced professionals whose experiences and ambitions help shape our work.

Financial Review

Reserves Policy

REN aims to hold reserves equivalent to three to six months of operating costs to support financial stability, meet its obligations and protect core services, staff salaries and operational continuity during periods of income fluctuation. The trustees seek to maintain this target through careful financial planning, income diversification and prudent expenditure management. Reserves are monitored monthly and reviewed at Board meetings.

Unrestricted reserves sit at **£90,168**, representing approximately five months of operating costs and remaining within REN's reserves policy target of three to six months. Restricted funds of **£81,609** reflect grants received for activity scheduled for delivery in 2026–2027.

Principal Sources of Funds and Fundraising

REN seeks multi-year and core support alongside project funding, corporate partnerships, donations and earned income. We secured five multi-year grants strengthening REN's financial resilience and enabling us to plan and invest for the longer term sustainability. This year REN's funders include Ashoka, This Day Foundation, Postcode Society Trust, the Rayne Foundation, the Hilden Charitable Fund and the King Charles III Charitable Fund. Key areas of income growth included:

- Grants & Trusts income of £178,609 against a budget of £75,000
- Corporate Partnerships income of £26,148 against a budget of £5,937
- Donations of £8460 against a budget of £500

Investment Policy and Going Concern

The trustees are satisfied that the charity will continue to be a going concern for the foreseeable future.

Reference and Administration Details

Charity Details

Charity name: Refugee Employment Network
Other name used: REN
Registered charity number: 1196168
Principal address: 54 Crewys Road, London, NW2 2AD

Trustees

Janice Lopatkin, Chair

Akeela Ahmed (Resigned January 2026)

Charlie Fraser

Chris Fitzgerald LVO

Elizabeth Bowles

Nour Talli

Sally Bailey

Souleiman Lazrak, Treasurer

Viet Hoa Ngo

Other Personnel and Advisers

Jenny Walton, Chief Executive Officer, appointed July 2024.

Independent examiner: Frances Wilde, Warner Wilde Limited, Chartered Certified Accountants and Registered Auditors

Structure Governance and Management

Charity Structure

REN is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation governed by its CIO constitution

Governing Body

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the overall governance of the charity. Jenny Walton leads its strategy direction and day-to-day work as Chief Executive.

Trustee Recruitment Appointment and Training

New trustees are appointed by the Board when the need arises and all appointments require Board approval. Trustee induction and training are undertaken as needed, including safeguarding training and an introduction to REN's policies, including its Safeguarding Policy. This year REN appointed three new Trustees including Chris Fitzgerald LVO, Viet Hoa Ngo and Souleiman Lazrak.

Statement of Trustees Responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' annual report and accounts in accordance with the requirements applicable to REN, keeping adequate accounting records, safeguarding the charity's assets and taking reasonable steps to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above for the year ended 31 March 2026.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature: *J. Lopatkin*
Full name: Janice Lopatkin

Position: Chair of Trustees

Date of approval: 6/10/26

Signature: Souleiman Lazrak
Full name: Souleiman Lazrak

Position: Trustee Treasurer

Date of approval: 05 October 2026

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	Charity Name Refugee Employment Network		
On accounts for the year ended	31/03/26	**Charity no (if any)**	1196168
Set out on pages	12 to 14 (remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)		

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31/03/26**.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:	FJ Wilde	**Date:**	12/10/2026
Name:	FJ Wilde		
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	FCCA DChA		
Address:	4 Marigold Drive Bisley Surrey GU24 9SF		

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Refugee Employment Network	1196168

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	01-Mar-25	To	30-Apr-26

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Donations and legacies	106,047	111,609	-	217,656	63,422
Charitable activities			-	-	
Other trading activities	-	-	-	-	-
Investments	-	-	-	-	-
Separate material item of income	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-		-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	**106,047**	**111,609**	**-**	**217,656**	**63,422**
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	**106,047**	**111,609**	**-**	**217,656**	**63,422**
A3 Payments					
Raising funds	-	-	-	-	6,250
Charitable activities	124,035	64,572	-	188,607	21,144
Separate material expense item	-			-	
Other			-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	**124,035**	**64,572**	**-**	**188,607**	**27,394**
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	**124,035**	**64,572**	**-**	**188,607**	**27,394**

Net of receipts/(payments)	- 17,989	47,037	-	29,048	36,028
A5 Transfers between funds	50,000	- 50,000	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	58,157	84,572	-	142,729	106,701
Cash funds this year end	90,168	81,609	-	171,777	142,729

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Cash funds - total by fund	87,879	81,609	-
	CAF balance	2,289	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	90,168	81,609	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK

	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

B5 Liabilities

Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
J. Lopatkin	Janice Lopatkin	06/10/2026
Souleiman Lazrak	Souleiman Lazralk	07/10/2026