



## Get Ready for Work

### Supporting refugees to build new lives in Dundee

The Dundee City Council ESOL team helps new Dundonians, with low levels of spoken and written English to realise their potential by gaining language and other skills to participate more fully in community, family, employment and learning. We do this by utilising a flexible and responsive approach and working collaboratively across the city to support learners wider needs and their progression into further learning, employment and community life.

The Employability Support Team engages, prepares and supports jobless citizens to participate in the range of Employability Services that assists with removing barriers to employment, achieving qualifications, gaining work experience and ultimately supporting them into sustainable employment.



In Dundee, the *Vulnerable Persons' Resettlement Scheme* and the *Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme* is delivered by a diverse partnership and through working collaboratively we have achieved a project that has successfully supported Refugees arriving in Dundee. Our first refugee families came in December 2015, and we now have 47 family groups and 96 adults settled in Dundee, a significant portion of the Scottish total.

Most of the refugee learners in Dundee arrive with minimal language skills. It is hard enough to find a job as a native speaker, but, without British qualifications and experience, even those with good English have struggled to find employment. Helping people into employment

is a really important step towards regaining their independence *Get Ready for Work* is an 8 week programme, which seeks to give refugees the employability and language skills to move into employment. The project was recently recognised at the 2018 COSLA Excellence Awards, winning a Gold Award in the "Improving Outcomes in Partnership" category.

At the beginning of September 2018, the first minister launched ***Delivering for today: investing for tomorrow. The Governments Programme for Scotland 2018 – 19.*** In it the Scottish Government prioritise:

*"work to develop opportunities for refugees to build their skills and employment options, including through volunteering and work placements."*

We believe that through *Get Ready for Work* we have developed a model which can deliver these ambitions. The course is primarily delivered by Adult Learning & Employability staff who track the learner's progress towards employment and work closely to help achieve goals from an action plan agreed with learners at registration.

Other partners include:

*Various Dundee City Council Departments  
Jobcentre Plus  
The Wise Group  
Project Scotland  
The Scottish Refugee Council  
The Prince's Trust  
Dundee and Angus College  
The Dundee International Women's Centre*

*Since January 2018:*

*5 courses completed  
40 completers  
9 people currently in employment  
12 job outcomes in total  
24 completed or currently on work placement/volunteering  
12 people in further education (ESOL and other courses)  
1 person has completed a business plan  
6 people on current course  
5 learners returned to a higher level English class*

Our programme is easy to replicate and we are sharing what we are doing nationally. Staff from other local authorities from across all the UK have, via the COSLA knowledge hub, requested to visit and see our materials and we have instigated a regional collaborative to develop and deliver shared projects to support Tayside and Fife's Refugee Community.

We believe that our model is really quite simple, mainly relies on existing resources and is essentially about:

- developing really good partnership working to improve outcomes for individuals, based on openness and mutual respect,
- valuing human rights and dignity,
- all partners understanding and supporting a personalised learning journey
- And a desire to strengthen local communities.



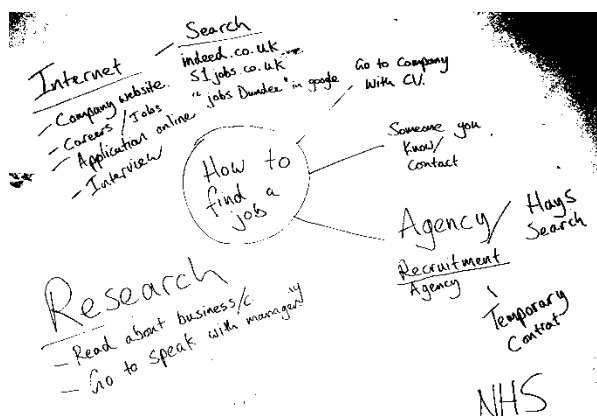


Our person centred approach, which started as response to the vulnerable person's resettlement scheme, is now being developed as a model for everyone. And we are exploring how we can adapt our model across Health and Social care with those affected by mental health and substance misuse issues. In Dundee we believe we do our best work when we do it together. It is a simple idea based on firm values, but it is successful because we know we are good at working together in Dundee.

## KEY STRENGTHS

*Working together, Learning together*

- The success of the partnership has been about developing better pathways for our learners and with graduates progressing to college or into employment we have been able to focus valuable resources on new learners and develop our ESOL provision creatively.
- Excellent communication across the partnership allows us to build an individualised programme for each client. We have created tools for data sharing which are accessible to all partners, across statutory and third sector, allowing us to share information about progress and impact.



## Going further than the resettlement of refugees

- Get Ready for Work is fully integrated into the "Dundee resettlement model" with the ESOL tutors and support staff who have been working with the families from the beginning delivering the programme alongside all the other partners.
- If further support is required post-course, the Employability Officer acts as case manager moving forward, until learner is 6 months into employment. This support is 1 to 1 and can take place in the learner's local area as opposed to a group setting in a city central location. Those in employment are offered English classes to fit around their employment so they can continue to improve their skills.

## We are extremely responsive –

- Adult learning ESOL staff know the learners well and understand their learning and literacy needs, this helps ensure we are able to support everyone's needs to the best of our ability. Learners who have struggled with the pace of the mixed ability "Get Ready for Work" group, have been supported 1:1 within the group by volunteer ESOL tutors who know them well from their English classes.
- Locally based adult learning colleagues meet learners before they come on the course to identify options and goals, and find out what is available to these individuals and their families in their local communities.
- We are working with the Dundee International Women's Centre to support women who have never worked but, as widows or because their husbands are studying, are the main benefit claimant and are subsequently required to look for work. This project is fully integrated into the Get Ready for Work project. Employment may not be the right choice for them and we need to think carefully about how we move people on appropriately.
- Many clients expressed an interest in setting up businesses so we are working closely with colleagues from the City Council's Ezone (business start-up project) and the Scottish Refugee Council to support enterprise.



# Case Studies:

## Progressing in employment

A arrived in Dundee in 2016 with his family. A skilled Blacksmith and experienced vehicle mechanic in Syria, he was unable to find a job in Dundee. After completing the “Get Ready for Work” course in March, he completed a 6 week work placement at Fairshare, a food recycling project and, on completion, A asked the agency if he could continue as a volunteer. He left Fairshare after successfully gaining employment with Dundee City Council’s fleet services in May 2018.

*“A has fitted in really well in the workshop and he is well liked by his colleagues. He has an amazing sense of humour. His timekeeping is impeccable and he is prepared to carry out any duties he is given to an extremely high standard. He is a model employee.”*

Stewart Dodd, Assistant Manager Workshops, DCC Fleet Services

In Nov 2018, due to a restructure, A was asked to apply for a promoted post. His Employability Support Officer, Gary, met with A to help him with the application and give him interview coaching to ensure he was fully prepared. A was delighted to be appointed to the post on a permanent basis at an increased grade and salary in November 2018.

## Fast track to employment

B moved to Dundee in 2018 as part of the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, having left Syria due to the civil war in 2011. Whilst she and her family were living in Egypt, B and her husband ran a catering business. On arrival in Dundee B was extremely keen learn English and gain employment. She enthusiastically attended all ESOL provision, began volunteering at a local community café and in October 2018, B was referred by her ESOL tutors to Get Ready for Work. Although relatively new to the country, B was so engaged with her language lessons and motivated with her volunteering that she was recommended to move into employment as soon as possible.

At this stage, B was not familiar with how to apply for suitable employment in the UK, and especially lacked the IT knowledge to create a CV and apply for jobs. She had also never attended an interview for employment in her native language of Arabic, never mind in English. B showed exceptional ability and dedication to the English lessons and employability sessions. With the support of staff and volunteers she was able to construct a professional CV and learn how to update this in the future, whilst vastly improving her vocabulary and understanding of the UK job market. She was a huge asset to the course within the classroom by encouraging and assisting her peers.

After the course, B continued to work with her Dundee City Council Employability Officer and in February 2019, on the recommendation of one of our GRFW volunteers, she applied for the position of Assistant Cook at a local restaurant. After some preparation with volunteers and staff from GRFW, she attended an interview and was successful appointed to the post. The job has made her more independent, confident and financially better-off.

## Working in partnership to gain qualifications to work in Scotland

We are really proud of the way Dundee is changing. There are lots of exciting building projects happening in our city right now. Plumbers, plasterers, electricians, joiners and bricklayers: a high percentage of the male adult refugees who have arrived in Dundee through the VPRS and VCRS were tradesmen in their home countries and have the talents and experience that our city needs. They are very eager to work and use their skills to support their families.



Unfortunately, they cannot currently work on a building site in Scotland because they do not have the language skills to pass the construction skills health and safety test (IOSH & CSCS). While the test can be taken in other languages, it is currently not available in Arabic. Having spoken to colleagues from across Scotland, we realised that this was also an employment barrier elsewhere. In response, we have developed a community based programme with Dundee and Angus College's Health and Safety Team, which is delivered in partnership with city council ESOL staff and culminates in learners having the opportunity to sit their IOSH and CSCS qualifications at Dundee and Angus College. This programme, which gives our learners the language skills and understanding to better enable them to pass the construction test, is supported by an employability officer who arranged a pre-course site visit to raise awareness of health and safety in Scotland and is working with these registered clients to help them quickly secure employment on completion. In addition, having the correct language and understanding to interpret instructions is extremely important for the health and safety of everyone working in our construction industries so supporting our learners to do this test in English, although challenging, is beneficial in the long term.

As this project is funded by the Dundee and Angus ESOL partnership, we have invited learners from Angus Council to participate in this pilot course, helping learners widen their networks and make connections.

## Continuing a career in Scotland

C came to Dundee through the VPRS and he joined our very first *Get Ready for Work* course in January 2017. He had not worked for three years but had previous experience as a barber.

Like all of our *Get Ready for Work* students, we arranged for C to meet the Making Money Work advice team, to undertake a "better off calculation", confirming that if C was to gain employment he would be financially better off. Seeing this information in writing it gave C the confidence and motivation to move into employment.

C attended the course, put together a CV and soon started applying for jobs. It was recognised it was vital to ensure C's confidence and motivation continued to grow and it was arranged for him to attend a Mindset course.

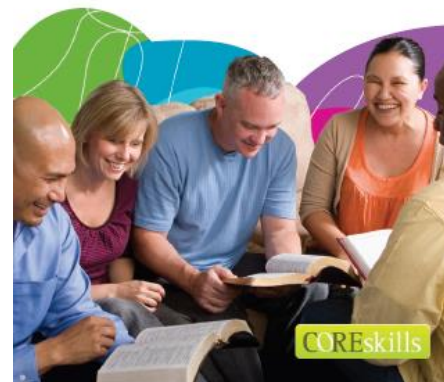
Supported by his Dundee City Council Employability Officer, Gary, C approached a local beauty salon, Elegance Brow & Beauty Ltd and arranged for C to attend and undertake a short 2 week work placement. Gary discussed this with the owner who confirmed that if C performed well in the work trial he would be offered employment. After successfully completing the work trial C was offered the job as a barber and he started work in August 2018.

## Upskilling staff across the partnership to accredit learning

Recognising that most of our learners did not have any qualifications which are recognised in Scotland, we decided that accreditation had to be part of the GRFW programme. From GRFW2 onwards, all learners have gained an SQA core skills award in ICT at SCQF level 3 or 4.

Two members of staff within the adult learning ESOL team have the required qualifications to support the internal verification of core skills awards, but not the capacity to develop accreditation across our partnership to the extent of our ambitions. These two members of the ESOL team are therefore supporting four staff from the Employability and Adult Learning ESOL teams to achieve SQA Assessors awards to increase our joint capacity and further embed accredited awards into our work together, as well as our own core projects. Working across different council teams and departments has been a great way to improve standardisation, break down professional barriers and identify new areas where we can start accrediting learning, to improve our service to Dundee's residents.

Core Skills – Essential Skills  
for Life and Work  
Information for Candidates



### D's Story

*My name is D. I'm Syrian. Before the war started in Syria I was working as an accountant for five years. When the war started, I moved to Lebanon and I worked as a bus driver there, then I got the chance to move to Scotland with my family through the United Nation Programme. We arrived in 2017.*

*After arrival I found the life here is difficult. The pressure of learning English in a short time and getting a job was hard. But after I enrolled in the Get Ready for Work course my chance has increased. This course gave me the skills and experience needed to live here and gave me the self-confidence to get out there and start a life again. One of my goals right now is to improve my English which will help me achieve my dream to become an accountant and I know with the support from my family and mentors I will get there.*

### On-going journey towards self-employment

D, who arrived in Dundee in 2016, was a small business owner, running a taxi and transport business in his home town, in Syria. With the help of his wife and sons, he also catered for weddings there, serving his native cuisine for up to 1000 guests per sitting. On his arrival in Dundee, D found that much of his experience as a business owner and chef had become difficult to transfer in the UK, due to his limited English.

In May 2018, with his sights set on opening his own Syrian themed restaurant in Dundee, D joined the GRFW programme. As part of D's action plan, it was identified that if he was to one day own a restaurant, he would need to more fully understand the hospitality industry in the UK and also obtain food hygiene certifications. For this reason it was decided that he would apply to study Professional Cookery at Dundee & Angus college whilst undertaking a 12 week work placement at Dundee City Council's Oaklands Centre (a day centre for elderly residents of Dundee). D excelled in both his college course and work placement and has now been referred to DCC E-Zone project, giving him the support and guidance he needs to start his own restaurant. He will also have access to grant funding and advice on further financial assistance.

His English language has improved greatly since arriving in the UK, evidenced by his attendance of a mainstream further education course and writing his own business plan in English.

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If you would like to find out more about the Get Ready for Work programme, please contact:  
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