

Employing Ukrainian Refugees- Part Two: Integration

So, you've decided to employ a Ukrainian national, but have concerns about integrating them into the business.

What should you do to combat language barriers? What wellbeing support should you provide? How can you ensure they fit well within your company culture?

In the second part of our Ukrainian series, we'll take a look at how you can make integration smooth and provide support to your new staff member.

Communication is key

In most cases, you won't know the entire history of the person you employ. However, if you employ a Ukrainian refugee, you know that they have recently experienced great upheaval. The individual will have lost their home and may have recently lost friends or family members. They may still have loved ones in Ukraine that they are concerned for. Considering all of this, they might not be in the best headspace to start a brand-new role. This is why communication is key.

Any meetings you have with the individual should be supportive and frequent. This will help the staff member feel fully supported. It helps you anticipate any further support that may be required and help manage their workload if necessary. It will also allow them to feel comfortable raising concerns.

If you employ Ukrainian nationals on a visa, the crisis could have implications for their visa or right to work in the UK. Hold individual supportive meetings to address any potential issues, particularly if there are visas which are due to expire imminently.

Talking about trauma and crisis

While it may be difficult, an open conversation around mental health is always the best approach to take. Trauma can have devastating implications if ignored. As an employer, it isn't your job to identify trauma. But, you do have a duty of care for your employees. That means it's your responsibility to recognise when someone is struggling and provide the relevant support.

If someone has experienced trauma, speaking to a professional is the best course of action. If you have an employee assistance programme, staff can access support through that. If not, you can refer them to occupational health.

When trauma and crisis are worked through and understood, recoveries are quicker. So, while you might not be directly involved with treatment, there are other ways you can help. Make sure your workforce know that they can approach you, HR, or a line manager when they are struggling. Email communications, company meetings, or posters around the workplace are all good ways to reinforce the message.

If an employee does approach you and opens up about trauma, actively listen to what they have to say. Discuss options moving forward, and how you can best support them at work.

Help supporting a Ukrainian refugee at work

There are many ways you can support a Ukrainian national in your workplace. Whether you want to provide additional training, or integrate them better with their colleagues, we can help.

Our HR consultants are expert mediators and can even conduct meetings on your behalf. Call today to find out how we can support you and your staff on **0844 561 8133** and quote **80168**.