

REN/RMT Refugee Employment Database: FAQs

Does it cost for employers to advertise their external vacancies?

In Australia, this is down to individual refugee organisations to decide and depends on their business models.

For the REN version of this platform, the options for costs/fees/funding are open for discussion and will form a part of upcoming conversations.

Does REN think UK employers are likely to be interested in this? The UK employment opportunities are probably different to Australia where it sounds like employers have many vacancies. How will REN advocate to employers to encourage them to use this system?

One of the benefits of this platform is that capturing employment data allows us to aggregate information about clients and their backgrounds, and use this for advocacy, as a way of changing the narrative around the skills and experience of refugees via employer-facing discussions. In Australia, for example, refugee organisations have presented the platform to business groups such as the Australian Industry Group and Chambers of Commerce.

For the REN version of this, once we have come up with something workable, we will be consulting with employers. At the moment we are being approached by employers where there are significant skills gaps, for example health and social care, engineering, I.T, and construction. We are confident that there are businesses out there looking to recruit now and once lockdown starts easing.

Why does each refugee organisation have different arrangements with signing up businesses? Isn't it up to the database providers to define that?

In Australia, RMT provides the software solution and each organisation uses it under their own brand. Therefore, each organisation will create arrangements based on their own individual business models.

With the REN version of this platform, we will be thinking about ways to co-ordinate approaches to suit member organisations on a local and national level. As part of this, we will be consulting with employers, and we will also raise this point as part of discussions in the upcoming workshops.

Is your database only for more skilled candidates?

No, this platform has the potential to work for clients at any skill level. In Australia, there have been a wide variety of successful job matches from those at a very low level to those at a very high level.

Would this sit separately to the work that JCP does in the UK?

We envisage that this platform would sit separately to the JCP but that there would be some form of collaboration between the two. The exact nature of this relationship is an open question and one we will be discussing during the Scoping and Design workshops.

Can you tell us about data security and what protection is in place?

In Australia, the platform is built using the current best practice for security.

For the REN version of this platform, we will need to be audited to ensure the system complies with UK data protection and system security laws. This is a step which will come further down the line, after the initial prototype has been developed.

How adaptable is the database to work around young people who have arrived in the country without qualifications but are now in UK schools and colleges but are looking to gain work experience or internships?

In Australia, the platform has also been used by organisations working with several different groups to capture skills, aspirations and courses.

Will you have companies advertise social enterprise and apprenticeship opportunities?

The specific types of opportunity posted on the platform will ultimately depend on which employers use it, which will become clearer a little bit further down the line. In theory though, there is no reason why social enterprise and apprenticeship opportunities cannot both be advertised.

Are there any 'Responsible Business' criteria around its use by employers?

In Australia, these are decisions which can be made by each individual refugee organisation as part of their arrangements with employers.

With the REN version of this platform, we envisage that we will have a set of criteria to work from, although we would like to learn from other organisations in the sector to understand what these criteria should be. This can form part of the discussion which we will have during the upcoming workshops.

In addition to this, the anonymous nature of the client information on the database ensures that businesses approach organisations about potential job matches rather than going straight to the

client. This ensures that any vetting process can occur before connecting the client to the opportunity.

You seem to be talking about sizeable refugee organisations using the database. How do small sponsorship groups use it?

It is important that this platform is accessible by organisations of all sizes, and as such we will be looking into how smaller organisations or individuals can use it. Similar to other questions around costs and funding, this will form part of the discussions in the upcoming workshops.

How do you manage the fact that when a refugee arrives in UK, they may be a qualified electronic engineer but hasn't worked for over 5-6 years and therefore skills are very out of date?

The platform is able to capture that information, which shows where specific issues such as this one may lie. This information can then be used to understand where skill profiles exist and support business-facing advocacy accordingly.

Can some of the default entries on data entry be adapted to the UK versions? i.e., Levels of education adjusted to Pre-Entry - Level 2

The answer to this is yes. These more granular items (e.g., specific fields and field architecture) will be addressed during the upcoming Scoping and Design workshops.

Am I correct in assuming that the database application must be completed in English only?

Yes, the database application must be completed in English. For clients who do not have a sufficient level of English to do this independently, caseworkers or advisers must assist.

Also, to what degree would the applicant 'own' the application? And would responsibility for progressing rest with the applicant?

The degree to which the application can be 'owned' by the client will depend on their levels of English and I.T proficiency. In cases where clients do not have sufficient skills in these areas, it will be up to the caseworker to support them with this.

How is it funded in Australia and how would you envisage it being funded in the UK?

In Australia, the refugee organisations are funded by the Home Affairs department.

For the REN version of this platform, the funding model is yet to be decided on. For the prototype development stage we are currently in, firstly we are trying to put together a product that organisations want to use, then once we have succeeded with this we will consult on the best

ways to fund the programme going forwards. This is an area that REN is keen to take ownership of, and will form part of future discussions.

Is there a way to see if other caseworkers from different organisations are already supporting candidates to avoid crossovers?

This could be done by sharing client information between organisations, although we can discuss alternative ways to approach this issue during the upcoming workshops.