

Refugees set to lose out on English courses

Many refugees are set to lose out on English language classes under new guidelines put forward by the government for the next academic year. From August, funding for ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) courses will be restricted to people on 'active benefits' – that is people actively looking for work. Refugees on income support such as parents, carers or elderly people, as well as those on low incomes, will be exempt from funding.

The Refugee Council is putting pressure on the government to ensure that all refugees who need English language support can get it. Facing persecution, refugees are forced to leave their country to seek protection and often do not have any control over the country in which they find this safety. For many, arriving in the UK means having to cope with a new language, along with a very different society, job market, and wider culture. Access to ESOL is therefore crucial for refugees

so they can find and progress in work and contribute fully to British society.

Jonathan Ellis, Director of Advocacy at the Refugee Council said:

“Access to ESOL courses is essential for refugees rebuilding their lives in the UK. It is unacceptable that many will lose out on funding under the new policy, including the most vulnerable and those already in work.

“The government must acknowledge that many refugees have fled conflict and persecution in their own countries, usually with very little time to prepare. The UK has given these people refuge, so it is crucial they are supported to learn English not only to enable them to find employment, but also to ease their integration into the wider community so they can fully participate in British life.”

Source: Refugee Council

Funding slashed for refugee advice services

Funding for vital advice services for refugees and asylum seekers in the UK will be slashed by over 60% from April 1st 2011. The UKBA is cutting its funding for refugee charities, including the Refugee Council, who today warn of the devastating impact this will have on people seeking safety in the UK, as well as the wider voluntary sector and society.

From April, funding for advice services for newly arrived asylum seekers will be cut by 62%, funding for initial accommodation services will be halved, and contracts for the Refugee Integration and Employment Services (RIES) will end completely from September.

The Asylum Support Partnership, which is made up of the Refugee Council, the Welsh Refugee Council, the Scottish Refugee Council, Refugee Action and the North of England Refugee Service (NERS) is calling for the government to reduce the unprecedented scale of the cuts, and to give us more time to implement the changes.

In a joint statement, the Asylum Support Partnership said: “Savage cuts to the refugee charity sector will force people who have already fled torture, conflict and persecution in their own countries to suffer even further while seeking safety in the UK.

“This is unacceptable. Asylum seekers and refugees depend on the specialist services and expertise of refugee charities to enable them to rebuild their lives.

“Despite urging the government to reduce the unprecedented scale of these cuts, and to give us more time to implement the changes, we are extremely disappointed that cuts at a local and national level to our vital services will nevertheless go ahead as planned. While we are pleased the government has agreed to fund us at this level for an additional year, we remain concerned about the scale of the cuts and short timescale they have given us in which to reduce our services.

“We understand these are challenging times, but we are gravely concerned cuts this deep will not only devastate the organisations that provide asylum seekers with a lifeline, but will have a serious and lasting impact on the wider voluntary and public sector.

“Sixty years on from the UN Convention for Refugees, which has saved countless lives, it is imperative our government continues to protect those seeking refuge in the UK today. They must do this by ensuring the organisations that support them can carry on with their life-changing work.

Source: Refugee Council

Funding

New Rosa Fund for Women grants round open

Rosa, the UK fund for women and girls, is pleased to announce that the organisation's latest grant round is now open.

There is £100,000 worth of funds available and it is likely that two or three proposals will be funded. The deadline for the first stage expressions of interest is 5pm Thursday, 10th February.

Rosa believes that women and girls should be the central actors in both defining the change they need, and in creating it. She is therefore inviting proposals for dynamic and exciting projects that will have a significant impact on the lives of women and girls in the UK. Full details of the grant criteria and how to apply are available to download from her website: www.rosauk.org

New Fund Available! 'Active at 60' VOP are supporting the Greater Manchester Community Foundation to promote a new funding opportunity which has been set up to help older people keep active and continue to show that they're never too old to get fit.

Grants of between £250 and £3000 are now available to groups that have an annual income of £50,000 or under. To ensure that groups avoid disappointment they are being urged to get completed applications in as soon as possible.

The Active at 60 Fund has come from the Department for Work and Pensions and is being delivered in partnership with the Community Development Foundation. The fund won't be around for long! All applications must be received before the end of February however activities can be funded up until December 2011.

Funding Opportunity – Feelgood Fund

We still have some money left from our unique youth-led grant scheme, the Feelgood Fund! Groups of young people aged 16-25, or community and voluntary organisations in Manchester working with young people, can apply for grants of £200 to run one off or short term events which support one or more of the '5 Steps to Well-Being'.

Get your applications in now before time (and money) runs out!

For more details and an application form, contact the Community Foundation on 0161 214 0940, or email chris@communityfoundation.co.uk

Children in Need Grants Available

The Children in Need funding programme is open to not-for-profit organisations working with disadvantaged children and

young people 18 years and under in the UK.

There are two grant schemes: small grants of £10,000 or less per year for up to three years; and main grants over £10,000 per year for up to three years.

Children in Need can only fund projects that focus on the differences made (outcomes) to the lives of disadvantaged children and young people. It aims to fund projects where a small amount can make a real contribution to the success of the project. Grants can be used to cover capital and revenue costs.

For further information and to apply, visit: www.bbc.co.uk/pudsey/grants/general_grants.shtml, or contact 0161 244 3439.

The next deadline is: 15 May 2011

Community Fund

The Co-operative Membership Community Fund is our grants scheme which helps local communities throughout the UK.

Since we started the initiative in 1997, thousands of clubs, community groups and local charities have benefited.

The scheme is unique in that it is funded by generous Co-operative members donating some or all of their share of profits, which is then given away in the form of small grants in their local communities. These members have already given millions of pounds away, and last year alone over £1 million was awarded to successful groups. Please visit the website for more information visit: <http://www.co-operative.coop/membership2/Community-Fund/Post.aspx>

Job Opportunity

FRANCHISING OPPORTUNITY – "Finding Out About Franchising"

This email is to make you to make you aware of a new unique business start-up opportunity aimed at unemployed people or those facing redundancy living in Greater Manchester.

Blue Orchid is working in partnership with a project called "FranchisingWorks" to promote a new and affordable way to access franchising opportunities. For candidates with insufficient money, there is also a private fund to help meet the start-up costs of a franchise.

As you may know, franchising is where the owner of a successful business agrees to license the use of its operating systems, brand and other intellectual property, and to provide ongoing training and support to enable another ('the franchisee') to set up and operate an identical business elsewhere. In return the franchisee pays the owner an initial fee and an ongoing management fee.

Franchising is well established in the UK: there are 842 franchises in operation including well-known high street brands such as Subway, Prontaprint, Cartridge World, Cash Converters, Domino's Pizza, Kall Kwik, Dyno Rod, Rosemary Conley Diet and Fitness Clubs, Rush Hair Salons, and Thorntons.

In addition there are many more franchise businesses in everyday services such as plumbing, electrical services, car repair, IT repair, cleaning, after-school care and gardening. In short there is a franchise for just about every type of work/service you can think of, many of which require little experience and training.

With FranchisingWorks, which is a brand new publicly-funded initiative, free expert help is provided to enable you to access some of the UK's most successful franchise businesses.

Every week from 25th January we are running free 'Finding Out About Franchising' Workshops in our Central Manchester office. The workshop, which is 3 hours in duration, will also be run in other districts of Greater Manchester during February and March.

To book a place, please email events@theblueorchid.co.uk or call 0161 341 0245.

Job City 2011

The annual 'Job City' employment fair will take place on Thursday 10th February 2011, a large scale recruitment event for local employers and residents, which also provides information, advice and guidance for local residents in issues around employment, volunteering and debt management. The event takes place at Eastlands stadium across 3 suites and lunch will be provided for staff and volunteers. In previous years we have had up to 3,000 attendees at the event, engaged with a wide variety of public, voluntary and private sector employers, linking companies and opportunities to residents, and giving those residents the support they need to move into or change employment.

The event is being delivered this year through New East Manchester and North Manchester Regeneration Team, and will have space for up to 25 employers stalls, 20 employment support and training providers, with workshops for residents taking place in the executive boxes overlooking the pitch.

For more information please contact Cormac Downey at c.downey@manchester.gov.uk

STRIVE (Supported Transition Reaching Individuals via Employment)

Remploy in Manchester and Oldham have launched a programme called STRIVE (Supported Transition Reaching

Individuals via Employment). We are working alongside YMCA Training and KIDS to offer this programme to 16-18 year olds who need additional support with their learning to progress into employment or further training. The programme is open to 16-18 year olds that are NEETS (Not in Education, Employment or Training) or are at risks of becoming NEETS. Customers entering the programme will be included in Development Sessions to improve their soft skills, included in Recruitment Job Action Groups (JAG's) to introduce them to the employment market and in some cases a work trial or work placement will be arranged.

Our development sessions include (this is not an exhaustive list):

CV Writing, Interview Techniques and Mock Interviews, Application Forms and Job Searching, Employer Expectations, Workplace Standards, Anger or Stress Management.

The STRIVE programme is running from 3 locations: Manchester, Salford and Wythenshawe Centres.

Please contact Rebecca Relton on rebecca.relton@remploy.co.uk 0161 834 1043 / 077853 332 248 to refer your customers over to us or to discuss the programme in more detail. Places are limited and will be issued on a first come first served basis.

Volunteering opportunity

Refugee Action

Refugee Action exists to enable refugees to build new lives, through providing advice and information, developing communities, enhancing opportunity, and campaigning for refugee rights. The Gateway scheme assists refugees who arrive in the UK under the global United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Resettlement Programme to build new lives in the Greater Manchester area by providing information, advice and support.

The project provides integration support to refugees who have arrived in the UK direct from refugee camps as part of the government's Gateway Protection Programme. Refugees on the Gateway programme arrive in the UK directly from refugee camps and often have very complex needs.

Workers from Refugee Action support the refugees during their first year in the UK, giving support and assistance with everything from learning about their new community to accessing training, employment and education. The team works in partnership with local statutory

and voluntary organisations to provide access to existing services and develop awareness of refugee and asylum seeker issues.

In 2009 the project extended to cover 8 boroughs of Greater Manchester. The nationality of current clients includes Palestinians, Congolese, Iraqi, Ethiopian, Somali and Bhutanese. The project would particularly like to recruit people who can volunteer in Tameside and Rochdale. The roles we are recruiting for are:

Volunteer Advocate – The role is to support clients to carry out specific tasks and advocate on their behalf. These tasks will be directed by the Resettlement Work Team. The role offers experience in supporting clients to use and communicate with services.

English Practice Volunteer – This role is to help Gateway clients practice their English out in their community. The role offers experience in supporting clients to gain self-confidence and improve their English in everyday settings.

Gateway Online Forum Volunteer – The Gateway Online Forum is a message board in English to enable refugees at all stages of the Gateway programme to support each other. The role is to add information to the forum, promote to clients and assist in moderating the board. Further information including volunteer role outlines and application forms can be obtained from geraradd@refugee-action.org.uk 0161 831 5420

Marketing and PR Trustee Volunteer Needed

Creative Hands Foundation in Manchester is aiming to expand its board with someone with marketing and PR background to assist in the development of a marketing strategy for the organisation. We are looking for creative and innovation person who will be committed to promote the aims and aspiration of the organisation to stakeholders. We will expect the person to have good IT knowledge and skills who is keen to use their skills and experience in the voluntary art sector to help develop and grow this visual art charity based in Manchester.

This role is flexible to suit your own commitments however you must be attend board meeting and networking events to promote the organisation. You will work to establish wide contacts, produce and distribute e-news and events bulletins and up-date and maintain the organisation website.

If you would like further information or are interested in the role please contact Michelle or Joseph on 0161 226 1912 or info@creativehandsfoundation.org

Training/ Workshops

Free First Aid Courses For North Manchester Residents

Tuesday 15 February, 9.15am - 2.30pm
Harpurhey Neighbourhood Centre,
Carisbrook Street, Manchester M9 5UX
The Experience Volunteering Project are offering accredited first aid courses to any North Manchester resident (with an M8, M9 or M40 postcode) free of charge. Lunch will be provided and all participants will get a certificate at the end of the course. The centre has limited parking but there is off road parking available. All places will be allocated on a first come first served basis. To book a place or for more information please contact either Susan Willocks or Suzanne Roberts on 0161 230 1436.

Supporting Young People to Volunteer

The Manchester involved Team are offering free training across the city to enable organisations to support young people who wish to volunteer and successfully refer them onto volunteer placements. As you may know our funding is due to end in March this year, and in this last quarter we are putting various mechanisms in place to ensure that organisations are able to support young people who wish to volunteer and can successfully refer them onto volunteer placements.

The training will be full of ideas and information on how to support your young people to volunteer in their local communities, and will cover a number of relevant topics including: Myths & Truths, why volunteer, overcoming barriers, tips for motivating young people, types of Opportunities & where to look
There will also be the opportunity to network with other workers in your area and attendees will receive a copy of the newly produced Referral Organisation Toolkit.
Harpurhey - Tuesday 8th February 10-1pm (followed by lunch and networking)
Harpurhey Communications Academy, 2A Silchester Dr, Manchester, M40 8NT
Wythenshawe - Tuesday 15th February 10-1pm (followed by lunch and networking)
Wythenshawe Regeneration Team Offices, Alderman Downward House, Wythenshawe Town Centre, Manchester M22 5RF
Openshaw - Wednesday 23rd February 10-1pm (followed by lunch and networking)
The Roundhouse, 1328 - 1330 Ashton Old Rd., Higher Openshaw, Manchester, M11 1JG

Moss Side - Wednesday 2nd March 1-4pm
Moss Side Powerhouse, 140 Raby Street, Manchester, M14 4SL

To book a place contact Steph Champion on 0161 274 3299 or email: steph.champion@gmyn.co.uk

Community Development Project

Since the last issue, the team has continued to support refugee community organisations in Manchester, organized training course on Introduction to Community Development Training Skills and methods and this were well attended by representatives from refugee groups

The team has also supported Hazara Community Association, Eritrean Community Association, Salford Welcome Group, ZIWO, BSSM with work including d accounts, fundraising, End grant report and accessing office space

The Community Development Project will continue to address the needs of emerging groups/communities and that of established communities in Greater Manchester to be able to provide service for their communities.

If you know of any refugee community that needs help to set up or develop a group, please do refer them to us or if you are already an established group and need some support, do not hesitate to contact us on 0161 232 7420 or email; belay@mrsn.org.uk



Training event for refugee groups, October 2010

MRSN Advice Centre

MRSN Advice Centre, 129 Princess Road, Moss Side, Manchester M4 4RB.

Mondays from 10.00 am to 1.00 pm Drop in sessions

Tuesdays Appointments only

Wednesdays from 10.00 am to 1.00 pm Drop in sessions

We can usually arrange advice in Arabic, Swahili and Somali, and with our dedicated volunteer interpreters in French, Kurdish, and Farsi.

To arrange an appointment you can call at the advice centre on Mondays or phone us on 0161 868 0777

Planning And Managing Projects

This is a call for people or organisations interested in attending two day training in 'Planning and Managing Projects' and for those who missed out last time.

The training will take place over 2 days on Tuesday 8th and Wednesday 9th March, from 10am - 4.30pm on both days at Gorse Hill Studios, 2 Cavendish Road, Old Trafford M32 0PS

Would you like...

Improved knowledge of what is needed to get from an initial idea, to becoming a project ready to take off?

Improved knowledge of the different stages of the project planning cycle?

Improved knowledge on writing a project proposal in a language/format that funders/commissioners understand?

Improved confidence to put your ideas and projects into practice?

Participants from our previous training course in December said:

"Fantastic content".

"Planning from the beginning to the end".

"Well developed and thought out course".

"Helped me to identify problems and how to structure them".

The participants scored the likelihood of incorporating the processes, exercises and use the tools for project development/management in their organisation as 9.8 out of 10!

Our training includes:

Introduction & Background to Setting up Projects, The Project Planning Cycle, Problem/Issue Identification & Formulation of Objectives, Assumptions, Stakeholder Analysis, Alternative Projects Analysis, Project Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation of Outcomes, Information on resources and extra training available from Union, Street's Social Intervention Team. IDEAL FOR community and voluntary organisations, arts organisations, social enterprises, charities, public organisations, projects or agencies.

Training will cost £60 per person or £50 each for a booking of 2 people and will include lunch and drinks. Please note that the course is not accredited however trainer Natasha Boojihawon is qualified in Planning and Managing Development at a Postgraduate Level and has had 3 years experience in Planning Projects and Project Management. You will leave ready to start planning immediately.

Anyone interested, please contact Natasha Boojihawon, Director & Project Manager on 0161 877 3124/ 07595 583 822