

# REFUGEE INFORMATION SESSIONS



Integration works best when both refugees and those receiving them have a good understanding of each other's expectations, cultural differences and practices.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM)- the UN Migration Agency has partnered with the UK to resettle refugees since 2004. As part of this work, IOM delivers pre-departure orientations that provide accurate and relevant information about life in the UK and equally important sessions for host communities about the refugees with which they work.

## What are Refugee Information Sessions?

Since 2016, IOM has therefore been delivering Refugee Information Sessions to local authorities and receiving communities across the UK. By exploring refugees' perspectives, experiences and needs, host communities can increase their understanding and adapt their support to be even more effective by earning the buy-in of those they seek to assist. This may help reduce the adjustment period for refugees and support strong integration services.

IOM's Cross-Cultural Facilitators are experts who have delivered sessions to thousands of participants in all twelve regions of the UK.

In the UK, IOM currently offers the following Refugee Information Sessions (although more may be available upon request):

- ✓ **Syrian Arab Republic**
- ✓ **Iraq**
- ✓ **Sudan**
- ✓ **Somalia**
- ✓ **Democratic Republic of Congo**
- ✓ **Afghanistan**

IOM UK can tailor information sessions to suit individual needs, including developing new sessions for requested nationalities or in specific sectors.

***"Excellent information, both facilitators were exceptionally knowledgeable and beautifully complemented each other"***

*-Syrian Mental Health Session Participant, Birmingham*

***"I have increased empathy for clients...with more meaning and understanding behind it"***

*- DRC Session Participant, Manchester*

***“This training needs to be delivered to all people involved in resettlement, top to bottom.”***

*-Syrian Session Participant, Belfast*

**Did you know?**

**Iraq had a 95% literacy rate before the conflict.**


### **How do Refugee Info Sessions work?**

From covering basic greetings to the potential expectations about life in the UK, Refugee Information Sessions help host communities better understand how to collectively assist refugees to rebuild their lives and encourage participation in the local community.

IOM regularly updates the sessions using information gathered from our global field offices and other relevant sources to reflect the shifting realities for refugees prior to resettlement. IOM partners with members of refugee communities to co-facilitate the sessions and provide insight into their history and culture.

Sessions are adapted to different audiences, including those working in councils, social support, health, police and emergency services, education, employment support, volunteering and community/faith groups.

IOM facilitators travel around the country tailoring each session for the specific needs of the area and can incorporate sessions into existing trainings.

 All sessions are CPD-certified and are tailored to the needs and interests of participants. The topics, duration and detail can vary, but the most popular sessions generally last 4-5 hours and include:

- ✓ **Modern and ancient history of the country**
- ✓ **Geography, demographics, religions and cultural groups of the refugees' country**
- ✓ **Cultural traditions (etiquette, clothing, holidays, diet, family)**
- ✓ **Health and education systems in the country**
- ✓ **Displacement and the humanitarian crisis**
- ✓ **Experiences of resettled refugees**
- ✓ **Subjects covered in pre-departure orientation**
- ✓ **Cultural adjustment experience**

### **About IOM**

IOM, the UN Migration Agency has offices in over 100 countries with over 10,000 staff globally. We are committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society.

Established in 1951, IOM works with migrants, governments and other partners to provide humane response to the growing migration challenges of today. By promoting international cooperation and dialogue on migration issues, we assist in the search for practical solutions to key issues facing migrants and societies alike.

In the UK, IOM's work encompasses resettlement and integration, community cohesion, combatting human trafficking and modern slavery, diaspora and development, migrant assistance, supporting migrant children and migration policy and research.

**For more information, please email [infosessionsUK@iom.int](mailto:infosessionsUK@iom.int) or call +44 207 811 6002.**