

Sodexo UK & Ireland joins Tent UK, a new coalition of companies connecting refugees to jobs

1 year ago



[Sodexo UK & Ireland](#) is one of 70 major businesses joining forces to advance the labour market integration of refugees in the UK.

Sodexo prides itself on being an inclusive employer and through its [Social Impact Pledge](#) has committed to do all it can to actively promote social mobility across its business and support disadvantaged groups in finding employment opportunities.

Raj Jones, head of DEI at Sodexo UK & Ireland explains: “Since the beginning, when Pierre Bellon founded Sodexo in 1966, creating social value through opportunities for people, suppliers and the communities we serve is central to how we do business. As a purpose-led business, we are committed to promoting equitable opportunities, valuing diversity, and creating an inclusive working environment for all. We are delighted to be a part of this coalition and look forward to doing all we can to support Tent UK in its efforts and to continue to welcome refugees into our workforce.”

In recent years, the UK has welcomed more than 500,000 refugees from countries, such as Afghanistan, Hong Kong, Syria, and most recently Ukraine – yet many have been unable to find formal employment. While they have the legal right to work, refugees are over 20% less likely to be employed than the UK population, with this gap widening to 30% for refugee women, according to the UK government.

At the same time, the UK is experiencing labour shortages, with almost one million job vacancies, across key industries such as hospitality, food service and others including manufacturing & healthcare.

Jen Stobart, UK Director at Tent said: "Tent is immensely proud to have brought together 70 leading businesses resolved to connect refugees to meaningful employment. Refugees face numerous barriers to formal employment, such as lower language proficiency, transportation issues, lack of childcare options, as well as a lack of social and professional networks. These hurdles require particular attention from businesses, who – by making small upfront investments and tailoring their hiring practices – can level the playing field and give a fair chance to the many refugees still looking for a job in the UK."

Joining the Tent UK coalition builds on the successful global relationship Sodexo has had with Tent since 2019, focused on improving the lives of refugees by helping them to enter the workforce through, hiring, training and mentoring programmes.

Gideon Maltz, CEO of Tent says: "At a moment when UK employers face significant labour shortages, yet refugees across the country struggle to find decent employment, we see an extraordinary opportunity for our work. The coalition of companies that has come together to launch Tent UK understands that we need to act at scale to help hundreds of thousands of refugees in the UK secure jobs, rebuild their lives, and integrate into their new communities. Tent is uniquely placed and ready to help companies develop ambitious programmes to include refugees."

Tent UK will offer participating companies a host of services free of charge including: resources and trainings for HR teams; the sharing of best practices and ideas distilled from Tent's global network of over 400 major companies across a dozen countries who are hiring and integrating refugees into their workforces, as well as tailored programmes and insights to the UK market context; regular convenings and workshops with other Tent UK member companies for peer-to-peer learning; and introductions to best-in-class partners across the UK that can source refugee talent based on the type of roles, the location, and their past performance.