



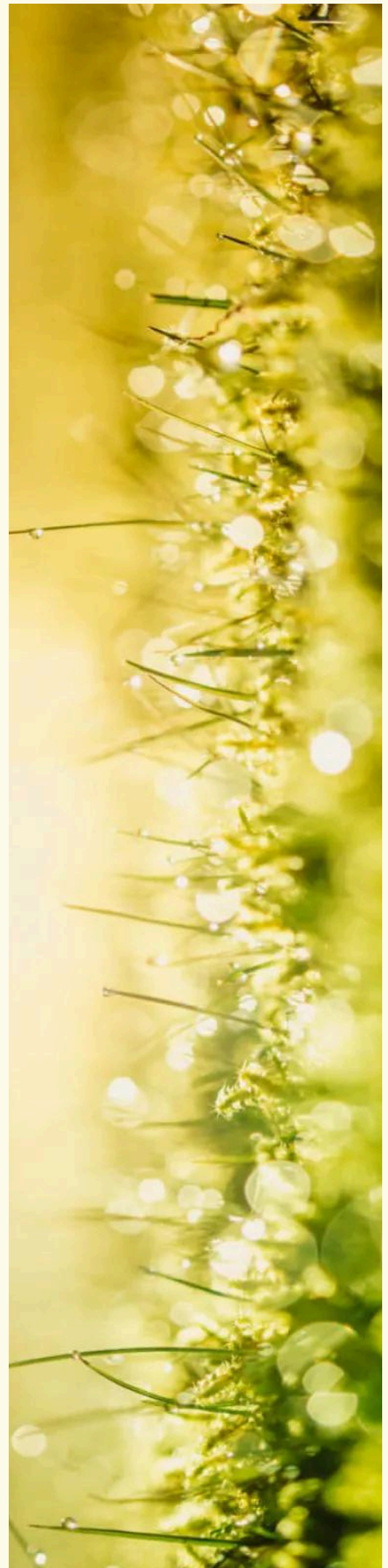
Neighbours for newcomers

Neighbours for Newcomers Training evaluation

Introduction

Neighbours for Newcomers (N4N) was designed by Reset in partnership with Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB) as part of a new pilot to resettle displaced talent in the UK. We launched the first N4N programme in October 2021 as part of NHS England and NHS Improvement's programme to recruit 25 refugee nurses arriving from Lebanon to work in the NHS.

Candidates were recruited by TBB, while Reset recruited, trained, and managed local groups of volunteers to provide a warm welcome for the newcomers when they arrived in their new hometowns. In the latter stage of the programme, which this evaluation applies to, our role was to deliver training to NHS Trusts, sharing learnings from our previous work. As part of this evaluation, we interviewed seven candidates welcomed by various Trusts about their experiences. This evaluation will serve as a basis for improving Reset's training and advice in the future.

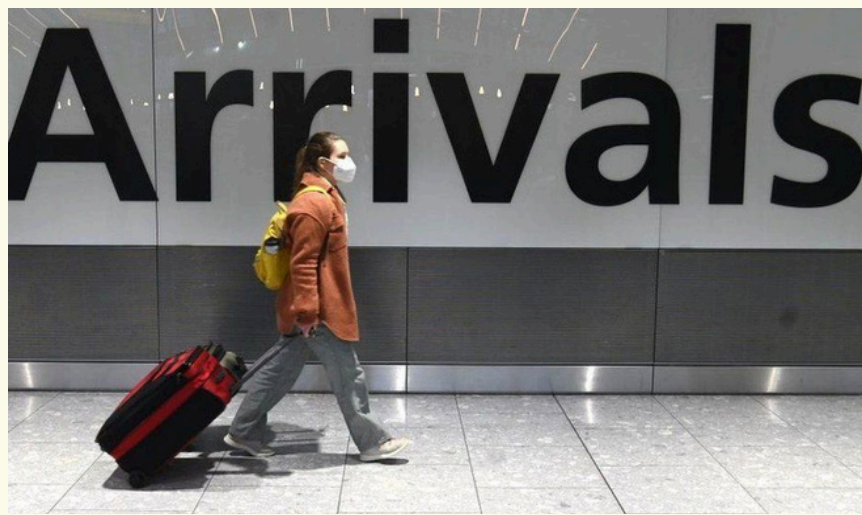




1 - Summary

- Majority of candidates were satisfied with the support they received.
- Integration support – candidates identified having a point of contact, someone whom they could ask questions, as the most helpful aspect.
- Almost all candidates mentioned being surprised by how expensive living in the UK is, particularly housing.
- Housing: When possible, being able to extend the stay in NHS provided accommodation (at a charge) was the most helpful aspect of support. This gave candidates more time to search for alternative accommodation or meant that candidates did not need to search for an alternative in the short term. Candidates suggested starting the search as early as possible as the advice they would give to others.
- Many candidates were happy with their managers and immediate teams, but in some cases, candidates found it difficult to occupy healthcare assistant roles for a prolonged period of time when they were already experienced as a qualified nurse.
- Most candidates suggested they would like to have more flexibility when it comes to preparing for exams, although they appreciated the support they received around this.

2 - Arrival and initial weeks



Most of the candidates were very happy with the support they received in the initial weeks to help them become familiar with their local area. Many candidates were eager to emphasise how helpful and friendly NHS staff who supported/support them are and how much difference this made. One candidate reported not having a lot of support beyond some written guidance and therefore relying on friends for navigating things such as opening a bank account or learning what is available locally. Examples of having a fridge and cupboards filled with halal food upon arrival, or someone from the Trust taking candidates around the local area, were very appreciated by the candidates.

When available, candidates mentioned that having a point of contact, someone whom they could freely get in touch with and ask questions, was the most important aspect of the support they received. In one case, a candidate mentioned this being a key component of support, even though they themselves did not rely heavily on this and only needed to get in touch with their point of contact a couple of times. Simply knowing that this option was there, if and when needed, was a source of assurance.

Multiple candidates mentioned that the UK is a more multicultural place than they had initially thought, and those settled in locations outside of London said they had no problem accessing culturally recognisable foods and products. Most candidates suggested that even though they knew before arrival that the UK is an expensive country, they did not know to what extent this was the case, particularly in relation to housing. Multiple candidates mentioned wanting to help the next welcomed cohorts with the transition to living in the UK, and some mentioned already offering support to those who arrived after them.

Some candidates mentioned not fully understanding how taxes work in the UK and therefore being surprised that the salaries quoted are gross salaries and not what is actually paid into their bank account. Some candidates highlighted the need for the UK taxation system to be better explained to newcomers.



3 - Workplace

The overall experience of adjusting to the UK workplace was very positive, with all candidates highlighting how helpful their teams and managers were, offering them additional support and guidance. Some aspects of this depended on how much work experience as a nurse candidates had prior to coming to the UK. Those who were more experienced tended to see the initial induction or initial set of responsibilities as a step back, however, these candidates still expressed general satisfaction with their workplace.

There were some suggestions of not just focusing on the role of a healthcare assistant and, for example, combining the initial induction with more practical tasks on the ward, or getting more opportunities to understand what a role of a registered nurse looks like. All candidates noticed some cultural differences between the work they knew in Lebanon and their workplace in the UK. These were things such as using different equipment, different processes, seeing managers and senior nurses being more involved in patient care, and in some cases, increased workloads. One candidate reported feeling that his previous experience, which informed some of the suggestions about potential improvements, were not taken on board. The candidate felt this may have been due to his current role as a healthcare assistant, and therefore his suggestions not being taken as seriously. Here too, in such instances, candidates highlighted having a 'buddy' or an allocated contact point whom they could ask questions as a particularly useful aspect of the support they received.



4 - Housing

Predominantly, housing was the biggest challenge candidates encountered when arriving to the UK. A couple of the interviewed candidates were able to stay in NHS accommodation beyond the initial three months of free of charge accommodation; when this was possible, it made things easier and saved candidates a lot of stress. When this was not possible, candidates tended to highlight searching for housing as the biggest challenge they encountered.

All candidates highlighted that they knew the UK to be an expensive country before arrival, but they were still surprised by how expensive housing is and how long it takes to find affordable accommodation. For example, some candidates were surprised that sharing with others was the only financially viable option for them and that renting an independent property was not a realistic option. The candidates who were able to find their own independent accommodation shared that they had to adjust their expectations of what this was going to look like. Many mentioned starting out by trying to find a whole house/flat to share with other candidates they knew, only to find that this was not possible and eventually settling by renting a room individually. One of the candidates we interviewed mentioned being very worried about becoming homeless as a result of not being able to find the next accommodation.

Not all candidates were satisfied with the standard of accommodation they were able to find. When asked about advice they would offer to others, almost all candidates suggested searching for accommodation as early as possible and almost immediately after arrival. Some candidates felt they did not receive as much support from the NHS Hospital Trusts as needed for this.

5 - English and OSCE exam preparation



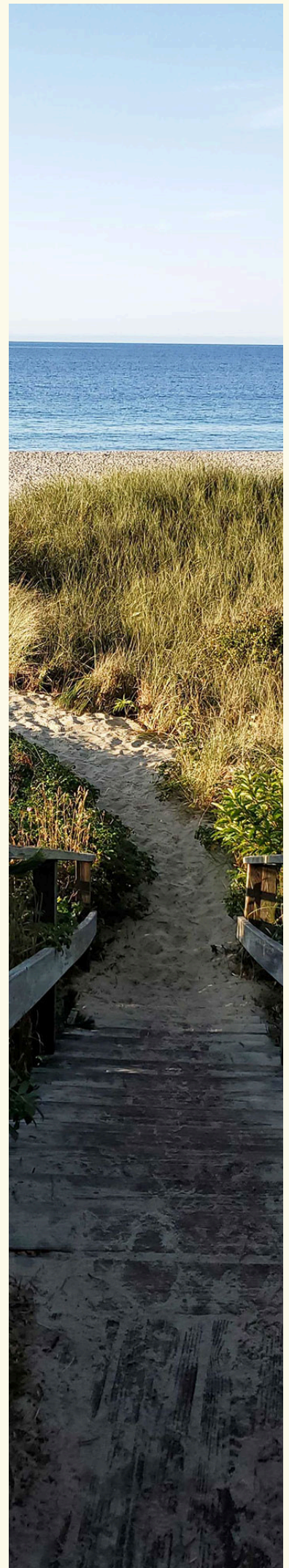
The experience of preparing for exams was quite varied, depending heavily on a candidate's level of English before arrival to the UK. Only one candidate had their PIN at the time of the interviews taking place (roughly seven months after their arrival to the UK). Some candidates reported feeling the pressure of having to study for the exams at the same time as searching for accommodation and adjusting to life in the UK. They suggested that having more time to stagger things through phases would have been more helpful.

One candidate described being stopped from taking the English exam until they completed the entire course, even though they felt that their level of English was sufficient to pass it. Some candidates suggested that they would benefit from being able to take the OSCE exam without having to pass all the English tests beforehand, as this would allow them to pass to band 4 more quickly. Another candidate shared that their English course took place one day per week over three months, and they believe that a more intensive but shorter course would have been more beneficial.

Overall, the candidates reflected that progressing to band 5 took them longer than they expected and wished things could have progressed quicker. Some candidates described having to put their lives on hold and focus on preparing for exams until these were completed. Candidates also reported that they felt the groups for English classes could have been better organised, as their groups included some people who had a low level of English, as well as those who were much more proficient. This meant that teachers found it difficult to pitch the class at the right level and students were not getting as much from the classes as they otherwise could have.

6 - Recommendations resulting from the evaluation

- Candidates benefit from having an allocated point of contact who they can speak with regarding questions and concerns, particularly early on.
- If possible, it would be beneficial to give candidates flexibility around how they progress with their exams and English learning.
- It is beneficial for candidates to start English courses before arrival.
- Candidates would benefit from participating in English classes aimed at their specific level, rather than a class with mixed levels of English proficiency.
- Candidates should start searching for independent accommodation almost as soon as they arrive in the UK (this is assuming that they only have access to three months of initial accommodation).
- Candidates need to have an induction which includes information around employment law in the UK, including how the UK taxation system operates.





Thank you!

Many thanks to all the candidates for sharing their experience and insight with us!



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