



## Refugee Legal Confidence Sessions LAP Induction Pack

Lawyers Against Poverty (LAP) is a growing global community of legal activists committed to building a just world without poverty. We connect our members with others who want to take action on social justice and support projects that improve access to justice worldwide. LAP was set up as an Oxfam project in 2015 and was established as an independent UK charity in 2020.

LAP has designed a series of workshops to help members of the refugee community build stable lives in the UK by providing useful information on topics ranging from employment and education to criminal justice and social norms. These workshops are not designed to provide legal advice but to improve participants' understanding of the civil and criminal justice system and their rights in the UK. Our aim for the sessions is to increase access to opportunities including employment, education and housing and through this improve participants' welfare more broadly. We have developed resources to support volunteers who are interested in running these sessions with a local refugee group.

Here is a step-by-step guide of how to get involved:

1. **SIGN UP AS A LAP MEMBER**

Join a community of like-minded legal activists. We do not require specific qualifications and welcome all members of the legal community committed to tackling social injustice. LAP members enjoy opportunities to connect and collaborate with lawyers around the world through events, volunteering and skills sharing opportunities. Once you are a member, you will have access to our thematic working groups, project opportunities and a wealth of resources to support you to take action on social injustice. Join now at [lawyersagainstopoverty.org](http://lawyersagainstopoverty.org)

2. **TELL US HOW YOU WANT TO GET INVOLVED**

The legal confidence sessions have been designed to give an overview of helpful issues and do not require specific legal expertise. Check our website for the different ways you can get involved and contact us at: [refugees@lawyersagainstopoverty.org](mailto:refugees@lawyersagainstopoverty.org)

3. **CONNECT WITH OTHER VOLUNTEERS**

Get together a team of two or three volunteers. You may have different levels of experience or come from different fields of practice. We recommend that student volunteers and trainees team up with at least one lawyer in case more complex questions arise. If you are not able to put a team together, get in touch and we may be able to connect you with other LAP members to form a group.

4. **CONTACT A LOCAL REFUGEE CHARITY**

Reach out to a refugee agency or charity active in your local area. These organisations are usually relatively easy to identify through an internet search. If you are having difficulty finding a partner organisation, let us know. We encourage teams to build this relationship independently but are happy to provide guidance or template wording for emails where helpful. It works best if one member of the team manages this contact. When contacting potential partner organisations, it is important to be clear about the scope of the sessions. The workshops are designed for refugees with the right to remain in the UK and are not a source of legal advice (even if trainers are qualified lawyers.) You will need to think about what facilities you will need and check if the partner organisation is able to provide these.

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Some organisations may have an existing group of participants while others may need to promote the workshops to canvas interest. Keep this in mind as you plan the sessions as this may take some time. We recommend continuing with your induction and session planning during the outreach stage.

## 5. REVIEW INDUCTION MATERIALS & LAP RESOURCES

LAP will provide a range of resources to help you prepare for your first session, including:

- List of “dos and don’ts” with the key points to keep in mind when running the sessions
- Refugee Legal Confidence Sessions Handbook
- LAP Partnership agreement

These are designed to familiarise you with the content and give you practical tips for delivering the workshops. The Handbook includes up to date information on all the topics you may wish to cover. If you have relevant expertise in an area that is not included in the handbook, we are continually updating the programme and welcome all support in broadening the content. Use these materials to inform your conversations with your partner organisation and agree on which topics will be most useful and how many sessions to run.

## 6. CONSIDER SESSION CONTENT

Prepare the sessions in consultation with the partner organisation. The existing materials include a range of topics including: employment, criminal justice and family law. If the organisation would like you to deliver sessions that are not yet covered, let us know and we can advise or assist in creating additional materials. Keep in mind what knowledge and expertise you have within the team and make sure that at least one of you is confident in delivering the topics requested by the organisation. You are not expected to be experts and our resources will help familiarise you with topics that you are less familiar with. When you have selected your topics, feel free to adapt the sessions in a way that is most relevant to attendees.

## 7. AGREE DATES

Find a set of dates which works for your team members and partner organisation. It can work well to run the sessions in consecutive weeks to maintain momentum and create close relationships but this is entirely at your discretion and will depend on your availability, that of participants and access to the venue. Once agreed, please fill in these details on the LAP Partnership Agreement you were given with your induction materials and share this with the partner organisation to ensure that everyone is clear on what has been agreed.

## 8. REGISTER THE PROJECT & ATTEND AN INDUCTION SESSION

Complete LAP’s Partnership Agreement letting us know who is going to be involved, what has been agreed and where it will take place. Send this to us once it has been agreed and signed by the partner organisation. LAP run induction sessions on a rolling basis for new volunteers, which you will need to attend before you can run your first session yourself. We will give you the upcoming dates for these when you register your project.

## 9. HOLD THE SESSIONS

The sessions may be held online or in person. Think ahead about how this is likely to impact on your delivery technique and make sure you have access to the relevant facilities for either format. If you are holding in person sessions, these should be held in a community centre or ideally the location of the partner organisation. Encourage questions as they arise during the session and try to keep the format as informal as possible so that everybody feels comfortable and able to participate. Remember that you cannot offer legal advice during these sessions - it is useful to remind participants of this at the start.



#### 10. LET US KNOW HOW IT GOES

We'll ask you to collect some basic information about the sessions you run, such as the number of participants that attended and topics covered. We would also be very grateful if you could ask those who attended the sessions for feedback in order for us to collect and share these stories and improve the overall programme. This can be done with a feedback form at the end of the sessions or via the agency or support organisation at a later date.

Points to consider:

- WHO SHOULD DELIVER THE SESSIONS - think about whether you will have one member of the team that acts as the trainer or if not, how to divide the delivery between you. It is not a requirement that the person delivering the session should be a lawyer in that area but you should be confident in presenting the material. Be sensitive to power dynamics and any ethical issues that may arise through your role as trainer and, where appropriate, discuss these with the partner organisation ahead of the sessions.
- THE APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE - keep in mind that English will not be the first language of most participants. If you are running an in-person session, consider whether it would be useful to have a translator in the session or to run the session in another language. If your sessions are in English, try to keep your language jargon free and check to see if everyone is able to follow. If you have relevant language skills and would like to help us improve our materials, let us know as we are always working to ensure the content is accessible to all participants and update our materials on a regular basis.
- EXPERT INPUT - though you are not expected to be an expert in these topics, there may be areas where you would benefit from expert input or guidance from an immigration lawyer. You may want to consider inviting an expert participant to specific sessions to answer questions or consult with them ahead so you feel better prepared.

Summary of key points:

- You may **not give legal advice** during these sessions.
- You **do not need specific legal expertise** but we recommend having **at least one qualified lawyer** in your team.
- One member of the team should be the **main point of contact** with partner organisation.
- You need to provide LAP with a **signed Partnership Agreement**.
- You will need to attend an **induction session** before running your first session.

If you have any queries or want to find out more, contact: [refugees@lawyersagainstopoverty.org](mailto:refugees@lawyersagainstopoverty.org)