

A Dietitians experience

I grew up in Turkey but because of my parents' job responsibilities, we moved around a lot within the country. I went to a private science high school with 100% scholarship, then applied for science subjects. I got into a university with a scholarship in Izmir, but after my first year, the government closed my university along with other related universities because of political issues. Then I applied again and got into one of the best and established universities in the country, which is called Hacettepe University. The transition wasn't easy, but I completed 4 years of the nutrition and dietetics course.

I came to the UK because of political issues. This led to a gradual closure of our schools, television channels and newspapers. This also resulted in millions of people affected by lay off's, social isolation and other more sensitive issues including discrimination. Many people left the country, some stayed and had to start from scratch. I and my family thought that starting a new life in a new country was the best choice because we didn't want to live with fear or discrimination. We had thought about leaving the country since 2016 but only found the courage to do it in 2019.

After I sought asylum, adjusting took a while, especially with the language. I applied for courses online, and later the charity [RefuAid](#) reached out to me and offered me language support training to gain my IELTS qualification (International English Language Test). I progressed greatly. I do not have my diploma document and I am not able to get it from my school in Turkey which will delay my HCPC registration, so my advice to others is to get their diploma from their schools if possible.

As I needed to get refugee status before I could get a work permit, it took me more than 2 years to gain UK employment. Eventually I benefitted from the Kickstart programme, and I was able to get a short-term job. But I really wanted to work as a dietitian.

I have always wanted to get experience in NHS. RefuAid helped me by teaming up with Health Education England. They found a local NHS Trust willing to offer work experience which led on to some support worker employment. This was such a great opportunity and will really help build my confidence and experience in the UK and help me towards full HCPC registration. If you are eligible to get RefuAid's help, I strongly recommend contacting them.

After I get my IELTS results, I want to apply to the HCPC for registration. I think the process is harder for international candidates because they may feel intimidated and out of place more than other applicants. My situation is not a common one, but I advise others to prepare for all outcomes and research deeply. I think employers should give good training and should assign mentors to their new employees, so employees can work more comfortably.