
Job description: Communities of Hospitality Project Assistant

JRS mission and work

The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic organisation, at work in 50 countries with a mission to accompany, serve and advocate on behalf of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons. JRS in the UK has a special ministry to those who find themselves destitute as a consequence of government policies and those detained for the administration of immigration procedures. JRS UK runs a day centre, activities and hosting scheme (*At Home*) for destitute asylum seekers, detention outreach services to Heathrow IRC and shortly hopes to begin a legal advice service. The work of JRS UK is carried out in collaboration with other JRS offices around the world, other Church and secular organisations, voluntary and governmental, which are active in the same field.

JRS values

JRS is grounded in Catholic Social Teaching and draws on the charism and principles of Ignatian spirituality. Staff and volunteers share a common set of values concerned with justice and the dignity of the person. As a Jesuit work, participative discernment and reflective practice are part of our ethos. If the successful candidate is not familiar with the spirit and charism of the Jesuits, there will be the opportunity to develop it through training, workshops and days of retreat.

Job Title: Communities of Hospitality Project Assistant

JRS UK is seeking to recruit a Communities of Hospitality Project Assistant on a part-time basis (22.5 hours weekly), to assist with the development and implementation of the *At Home* hosting scheme. The *At Home* hosting scheme matches destitute asylum seekers attending the weekly Day Centre with religious communities, parishes and lay people who are able and willing to provide short-term accommodation. The hosting scheme is part of a larger JRS Europe project promoting hospitality in ten different European countries. In the UK, JRS hopes to continue expanding the scheme, such that more destitute asylum seekers can access accommodation throughout the time that they are unable to work or access public funding.

The Project Assistant will provide the link between hosts and guest, coordinating placements, facilitating the encounter between host and guest while monitoring the progress of placements and overseeing the moving on process once a placement has come to an end. They will be responsible for the administration work necessary to keep accurate and updated records of the hosting scheme. This is a varied role, and from time to time the Project Assistant will be required to promote and publicise the hosting scheme among parishes and religious communities. Additionally, the Project Assistant will be asked to assist with organising meetings designed to facilitate the sharing of experience between hosts as well as meeting training needs. The Project Assistant will report to the Communities of Hospitality Project Coordinator.

The role involves travelling within London to visit hosts, with some evening work required. The post holder will need outstanding people skills, including empathy and confidence to deal with people of all backgrounds, ages and faiths to manage the process of placing guests with hosts and providing ongoing support; an understanding of the challenges faced by destitute asylum seekers; familiarity with the structures of the Church and religious orders and sympathy for the motivation of those whose life is grounded in faith; a willingness to work independently but also enthusiasm for sharing relevant experience with others; and a willingness to work flexibly including outside of normal office hours.

Responsibilities

A. Implementation of the At Home hosting scheme for JRS, under direction from the Communities of Hospitality Coordinator including:

- Responding to enquiries about the scheme
- Interviewing potential hosts and refugee guests
- Conducting necessary safeguarding processes
- Matching guests with hosts sensitively
- Providing ongoing support to both hosts and guests, enabling the hosting relationship to flourish
- Keep accurate and updated records of hosts and guests and the respective placements;
- Preparing paperwork required to ensure compliance with the relevant legislation
- Help with the drafting of materials to be used to promote and develop the scheme.

B. Accompaniment and service of destitute refugee guests

- Providing ongoing accompaniment and befriending of destitute refugees attending the Day Centre and identified as potential guests hosted through the scheme;
- Liaising with other staff members to provide casework support, as and when required.

C. Advocacy work

The Communities of Hospitality Project Assistant is expected to participate in JRS UK's advocacy work. This will include where appropriate:

- Liaising with other staff members, through sharing of information and experience, to develop materials for advocacy;
- Communicate JRS UK's advocacy messages to others including other refugee-assisting organisations, the Catholic community and members of the public in person and in writing.

D. Representational role in meetings

The Communities of Hospitality Project Assistant is expected to represent JRS UK in NGO fora and networks particularly relating to the hosting of refugees, and to collaborate with other JRS offices including the JRS Europe Regional office to share practice and experience.

E. Strategy for future work

The Communities of Hospitality Project Assistant is expected to work with the JRS Communities of Hospitality to develop the hosting scheme and implement it in accordance with JRS' strategic plan.

Person specification

Essential

- Sympathy and congruence with the values of JRS;
- High levels of personal resilience and emotional maturity;
- Discretion, tact and sensitivity to manage ongoing relationships between hosts and refugee guests;
- Highly developed listening skills and empathy for one-on-one work;
- Outstanding interpersonal skills, including empathy and confidence to deal with people of all backgrounds, ages, faiths and nationalities, and demonstrable experience of building trust, rapport and relationships across such divides;
- Ability to work flexibly as part of a small team;
- Enthusiasm for working within a faith context and for engaging with parishes and religious congregations;
- Understanding of the challenges faced by destitute asylum-seekers

- Willingness to work flexibly including availability for some out of hours evening and weekend work;
- Computer literacy: competent IT skills with Word, Excel and willingness to learn to use other databases and programmes;
- Ability to maintain accurate casework records and drawing up of relevant paperwork;

Desirable

- Prior experience of supporting and accompanying refugees and asylum seekers;
- Prior social work experience;
- Prior experience of working within the Catholic Church;
- Familiarity with the Ignatian charism.

The person must be permitted to work in the UK; (JRS UK is not able to obtain a work visa for this post).

Duration	18 month fixed-term contract; potentially renewable
Salary	£13,800-£15000pa for 3 days a week (22.5 hours) equivalent to £23-25k full time
Pension	Additional 10% of salary of employer's contribution