

Job description: Detention Outreach Officer

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 a legal advice service (from Jan 2019). We work to raise awareness of the situation facing refugees we accompany and serve by enabling their story to be heard. The work of JRS UK is carried out in collaboration with other JRS offices around the world, and other Church and secular organisations 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. We seek to offer safe and welcoming places where strong relationships of trust are established, and opportunities to participate and to flourish are sought.

Job Title: Detention Outreach Officer

The Detention Outreach Officer is a new full-time post on an 18-month contract, supporting JRS UK's accompaniment, service and advocacy on behalf of those held in the Heathrow Immigration Removal Centres (Colnbrook and Harmondsworth), joining a small tightly knit and diverse team at the JRS UK offices in Wapping.

JRS UK has been working with people in detention for many years and would now like to expand the services and activities we provide and increase the capacity of our team to provide support and assistance. Reporting to the Detention Outreach Manager, this busy and varied role combines pastoral accompaniment of detainees with informal casework, referral to specialist agencies and JRS solicitor liaison, as well as management of a small group of volunteers. The Detention Outreach Officer will also be responsible for the initial development and management of a new project aimed at continuing accompaniment of those released from detention through the creation of a peer support group, looking to support those who have experienced detention to process their experience and lead activity to support others. The Detention Outreach Officer will therefore also work with our Destitution Services team to ensure continuity and integration of support for those released from detention into destitution.

The post-holder will need highly developed listening skills, personal resilience and emotional maturity to respond to the emotional and spiritual needs of asylum seekers, accompany them and support volunteers to do the same. They need to maintain an up-to-date knowledge about the immigration and asylum policy context as it relates to immigration detention, the specialist work of other NGOs and be able to apply that to situations affecting individuals in practice. Having a background in community building and being comfortable in facilitating group sessions and empowering individuals will be an asset.

The Detention Outreach Officer will need enthusiasm for working in a small faith-based organisation and a willingness to integrate the Ignatian charism with their approach to the role (for which training and support will be provided), while at the same time having the sensitivity to respond to the needs of people in detention with varied faith backgrounds, serving all without proselytising, and without discrimination or favour.

Specific responsibilities

Accompaniment and service of those in detention

The Detention Outreach Officer is expected to visit those in immigration detention regularly and respond to their needs by, for example,

- ongoing accompaniment and befriending;
- referral to JRS solicitor liaison or another specialist agencies;
- provision of post-release support.

Post detention support

The Detention Outreach Officer will be responsible for the initial development and management of a new post-detention support project. This will include:

- maintaining contact after release with those supported by JRS in immigration detention;
- creating and facilitating a peer support group, looking to support those who have experienced detention to process their experience, including organising and delivering any other connected activities as required;
- collaborating with JRS Destitution Services team to ensure continuity and integration of support for those experiencing destitution;
- creating and maintaining good relations with other organisations and agencies to signpost/refer individuals to specialist services, where needed.

Volunteer development and coordination

The Detention Outreach Officer is expected to:

- assist the Detention Outreach Manager and the Community Outreach Officer in outreach activities with parishes, religious communities and other groups in order to develop a volunteer base for the detention work of JRS UK;
- assist the Detention Outreach Manager in supervising volunteers in the delivery of JRS outreach services, including volunteer social visitors, volunteers working with pastoral and welfare offices in detention, and volunteers supporting former detainees in the community after their release.

Advocacy work

The Detention Outreach Officer is expected to work closely with the Communications team to look for ways to enable detainee experience to be heard by others and to seek to change the practice of detention. This will include where appropriate:

- collaborating with other JRS staff to draw together advocacy messages and to communicate them to others including the Catholic community and policy makers;
- collaborating with other NGOs;
- developing ways for detainees and former detainees to share their experience.

Administration of files

The Detention Outreach Officer will be responsible for ensuring paper and electronic casefiles are kept up-to-date and maintained in accordance with data protection legislation.

Outreach events

The Detention Outreach Officer is expected to make themselves available to run occasional external workshops, speak at events, etc. as the need may arise.

Personal growth and development

The Detention Outreach Officer is expected to engage with opportunities for training and development, and to reflect regularly on practice. This includes:

- taking part in team reflection mornings;
- attending formation and training about Ignatian approaches;
- attending non-managerial supervision and psychological support to support self-care.

Person specification

Essential

- Sympathy and congruence with the values of JRS and enthusiasm for JRS' mission of accompaniment, service and advocacy on behalf of refugees.
- Highly developed listening skills and empathy for one-on-one work.
- High levels of personal resilience and emotional maturity for working closely with people in distress.
- Discretion, tact and sensitivity.
- Experience of working with refugees or vulnerable migrants.
- Experience of working with people from varied backgrounds and faiths.
- Aptitude for facilitating groups, demonstrable by experience gained in another setting.
- Outstanding oral and written communication skills.
- Ability to work flexibly as part of a small diverse team.
- Computer literacy and experience of maintaining databases.
- Enthusiasm for working within a faith context and for engaging with parishes and religious congregations.
- Prior experience of working in an area governed by complex policies and regulations.
- Creativity to develop future work.
- Commitment to personal growth and reflection on practice.

Desirable

- Experience of working or volunteering in a faith-based setting.
- Prior experience of working in a detention or prison setting.
- Experience of managing volunteers.
- Experience in community building and facilitating group sessions.

We welcome applications from refugees and from people who have experienced immigration detention.

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 contract
Salary	£24-28k pa; full time.
Pension	Additional 10% of salary of employer's contribution

Only short-listed candidates will be notified.