



Jesuit Refugee Service UK
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Accompaniment Volunteer: Embassy

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 has recently begun a legal advice service. We work to raise awareness of the situation facing refugees we accompany and serve by enabling their story to be heard.

Volunteer role: Accompaniment Volunteer - Embassy

JRS UK runs a weekly Day Centre, which welcomes and provides services for destitute refugees and other forced migrants. Many of our refugee friends are in limbo because they cannot get documentation – the UK does not recognise their right to be here and countries that they are from refuse to document them. In some cases, the Home Office have disputed their nationality. For some, a way forward is to show they are unable to obtain documentation by trying to do so, by approaching the embassy. This is a big step to take and they need someone to be with them not only to give moral support but also to witness and record what happens and be ready to give evidence of this.

Many of our refugee friends and others have attended embassies alone in the past and, all too often, the Home Office does not accept their account. Most solicitors are unable to find the time or resources to go with their clients. By doing this we think we will be able to shine a light on what is really going on, give our friends confidence to take this step when it is the right thing for them to do and help to move their cases forward.

JRS UK are looking for volunteers who can accompany, in person, refugee friends who would welcome this form of support when visiting embassies. By going with them, making notes, recording what happens, and drafting statements we can help build up crucial evidence to support fresh claims or applications where people are stateless. In some cases, you may also be asked to attend court hearings to back up your statements.

Person specification

- Commitment and ability to relate with respect to refugee friend
- Ability to relate with sensitivity and empathy to refugees and persons experiencing anxiety or distress
- Commitment to confidentiality
- Patience and stamina – you may be required to wait for long periods in the queue and/or for the friend to be allowed to leave the reporting centre
- Flexible disposition – arrangements may be subject to alteration at very late notice



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- Reliability
- Personal resilience
- Commitment to support refugees and other forced migrants
- Commitment to the values of JRS: dignity, justice, solidarity, compassion, hospitality, participation, and hope.
- Ability to travel in London
- Ability to take accurate and detailed notes in English
- Willingness to give evidence at court hearings

It is likely that requests to accompany a refugee friend will be made on an ad hoc basis. JRS will provide induction and support to Accompaniment Volunteers. The role does not involve providing advice, but the legal team will be offering specific training and advice for those who are interested in taking this on. Travel and other expenses will be paid.