

Detention Visitor Volunteer

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: Detention Visitor Volunteer

Those held in immigration detention find themselves in a lonely and isolated environment, having been removed from family, friends and communities, often without much warning. In order to begin breaking down this sense of isolation, JRS UK organises regular visitors for those who would like someone to talk to during this difficult time.

Accompanying those we serve is an essential ingredient of our work, and a unique ethos that radically alters the beneficiary/service provider relationship. Key to the role will be the building of a relationship of trust, offering free, confidential and non-judgemental support through engaging in accompaniment and helping those in detention re-gain a sense of self-worth as individuals. We place a high value on getting to know refugees as people with gifts and personalities - not only defining them based on their immigration status.

The role will suit someone who can combine excellent people skills with a real commitment to our mission of accompaniment. After each visit you will be required to fill in a report, highlighting any concerns you have for an individual's welfare, which will be added to our ongoing casework support for individuals and allow for appropriate follow-up where needed.

Person specification

- Sympathy with the values of JRS
- Enthusiasm for our mission of accompaniment, service and advocacy on behalf of refugees
- Commitment to supporting refugees and forced migrants
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Patience, tolerance and sensitivity
- Empathy, a non-judgemental attitude and respect for confidentiality
- Ability to relate to individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds
- High levels of personal resilience and emotional maturity
- Good IT literacy skills, in particular use of MS office (Word, Excel and PowerPoint)
- An ability to speak other languages is highly desirable, though not necessary

Hours: Visiting 1 hour per week + time for travel, writing reports, and attending training and monthly meetings.