
Emergency Response Team – Phone Support Volunteer (Practical)

JRS mission and work

The Jesuit Refugee Service has projects all over the world. In the UK, we are a small organisation based in East London, supporting people who have been made destitute by the asylum process and those held in immigration detention. We are a Catholic organisation, but we serve people of all faiths and none. Our staff and volunteers are very diverse and many are refugees themselves.

Our mission and purpose is to accompany, serve and advocate on behalf of refugees. To accompany means literally to 'be with'. We stick with people, regardless of how difficult things get, and we try to create spaces for friendships and community to develop. Because of the importance of friendship to us, we refer to those we support as *refugee friends*, not clients or beneficiaries.

JRS UK runs a Day Centre, activities, a legal advice service and hosting scheme (*At Home*) for destitute asylum seekers, detention outreach services to Heathrow IRC and support to people who have been released from immigration detention. We work to raise awareness of the situation facing refugees we accompany and serve by enabling their story to be heard.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, we have had to make temporary changes to our services, and as a result need to recruit new volunteers to help us get help to people who need it.

Role description: Phone Support Volunteer (Practical)

The people we support have precarious housing arrangements and are destitute (unable to work or claim benefits) as a result of the asylum process. The food shortage brought about by the coronavirus outbreak is dire for some refugee friends, and the suspension of most day centres supporting destitute migrants has left many with no source of support. In response, JRS UK has set up a new Emergency Response Team to distribute food parcels and hygiene packs to the most vulnerable refugee friends we support, taking the essential help from our Day Centre out onto the road. We are also supplying mobile phone top-ups, as these have become essential to maintain connections with families, friends and other sources of support.

JRS UK are looking for volunteers who can assist with making phone calls to refugees to confirm practical information necessary for us to continue supporting them in this way. This usually entails, for example, confirming mobile phone networks for top ups, physical addresses and special needs for emergency deliveries, following a phone script which is regularly updated.

The ideal volunteer would commit to making at least 10 phone calls per week (days and times are flexible), but we would also welcome enquiries from potential volunteers who can commit to helping on a more limited basis. All volunteers are expected to report back the information they receive.

JRS will provide induction and support to all volunteers.

Person Specification

- Commitment and ability to relate with respect, sensitivity and empathy to refugee friends, particularly those who may be experiencing anxiety or distress
- Commitment to abide by JRS UK's policies and protocols, including those on infection prevention, safeguarding, confidentiality and data protection
- Patience, personal resilience and a non-judgmental attitude – you may be required to wait for refugee friends to answer their phones or make multiple attempts at calling before you are successful
- Reliability and flexible disposition
- Confident speaking on the phone, including with people who may speak limited English
- Attention to detail and good record keeping
- Commitment to the values of JRS: dignity, justice, solidarity, compassion, hospitality, participation, and hope.
- An ability to speak other languages is highly desirable, though not necessary