

Casework and Support Manager

JRS Mission

The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic organisation at work in over 50 countries around the world with a mission to accompany, serve and advocate on behalf of refugees and those who have been forcibly displaced. In the UK, JRS works with those who have been made destitute during the asylum process, and those detained for the administration of immigration procedures.

JRS Values

JRS work is based on hospitality, carried out in a spirit of compassion and solidarity, encouraging participation and community, aiming to kindle hope, secure justice and affirm the dignity of refugees and forced migrants. Reconciliation, rooted in justice and sought in dialogue, is a theme of JRS work around the world. JRS work is grounded in Catholic social teaching and draws on the charism and principles of the spirituality of the Jesuits; participative discernment and reflective practice are part of our ethos. We serve people of all faiths and none, without favour or proselytising in return for services.

About JRS UK

JRS UK provides advice and casework, practical support, creative and therapeutic activities, a small hosting scheme (*At Home*) and a specialist legal advice service for destitute asylum seekers; we also run a detention outreach service to Heathrow and Colnbrook IRCs, including a befriending service, as well as a peer support group for people who have experienced detention. JRS UK undertakes research for advocacy to policy makers, alongside communications and outreach to the Catholic community, to raise awareness of the real situation facing asylum seekers and to argue for a change in policies that undermine their dignity and a just society.

JRS' distinctive ethos of accompaniment radically alters the beneficiary–service provider relationship and affects all that we do: we place a high value on coming to know refugees as people with gifts and personalities, not only defined by their situation in immigration law. Through our services, we seek to offer specialist intervention and respond to practical needs, but also to create spaces of hospitality, community, friendship and participation, which enable refugees to heal and shape their own future. Our advocacy, communications and outreach are similarly rooted in accompaniment, beginning with listening to the experience of refugees, bringing opportunities for their experience and voices to be heard, understood and create change.

JRS UK is based in the Hurtado Jesuit Centre in Wapping, East London. Although our centre is currently closed due to the Coronavirus pandemic, we are still providing support to people remotely by phone and online. JRS currently has 22 full and part-time staff and around 100 volunteers, drawn from a wide variety of backgrounds and nationalities, generations and beliefs, including refugees, young graduates and vowed members of religious congregations; this diversity of perspectives and experience is a source of particular strength for our mission. We seek to work collaboratively with others, including JRS offices around the world, Jesuit works in the UK and many others in the Church and refugee and migration sector.

JRS UK is a project of the British Jesuits' Charitable Trust (TRCP) and shares the same charity number.

Casework and Support Manager

We are seeking an experienced casework manager with commitment to our mission of accompaniment of refugees, to oversee our provision of advice and support in the areas of housing, asylum support, welfare, and health access and mental health. The post would suit someone who is OISC registered, with significant experience of supporting people with insecure immigration status, experience of line managing staff and volunteers, supervising casework and coordinating work on complex cases across teams. The postholder will need high levels of emotional intelligence, pastoral sensitivity, and a reflective approach to their work, in addition to depth of knowledge of the asylum system and housing, health and social care landscape.

JRS UK has been in the process of expanding and diversifying the services it provides to destitute asylum seekers over the last few years. COVID has both interrupted this planned process and accelerated some elements of change. Like other organisations, we have temporarily suspended our face-to-face services, but moved advice, casework, emotional and spiritual support to phone and online. The practical support previously provided by our weekly day centre has been taken onto the road through a new emergency response project, operating out of our Wapping base. As we continue to respond to increased demand for advice, support and casework, we have adjusted roles within the destitution services team to increase capacity for casework. Consequently, this post is offered initially on a 12month contract, reflecting the uncertain nature of the public health situation, but is likely to be renewable, with some change to the role. Our current planning assumptions are that the destitution service teams will be working from home until at least Spring 2021; if the public health situation allows, we will then begin a phased return to face-to-face services from our Hurtado base and other locations. The postholder will need to engage proactively with our Emergency Response Team and Operations staff as we plan service adaptation and adopt a highly flexible approach.

The Casework and Support Manager will conduct their own casework and referrals, line manage a small staff team in the destitution services team and also oversee a volunteer network providing emotional support, initially by phone, to around 100 people. When face-to-face work returns, this will be extended to an in person accompaniment network. The Manager will also coordinate cross-team case meetings involving the JRS legal advice team, accommodation staff and detention outreach team ensuring coordination of support, in line with our holistic model.

With the staff and volunteer team currently working remotely, the ability to supervise and provide pastoral care to staff and volunteers is a particularly important aspect of this role. The relational nature of our work, placing the person at the centre, and paying attention to physical, emotional, spiritual and social needs, extends to the way we seek to support staff and volunteers, as well as the refugees we accompany. The postholder should be able to encourage reflective practice in others and have experience of supporting front-line staff to process distressing situations. Key elements of this role include running an online space focused on wellbeing for front-line staff and coordination of volunteer reflection meetings.

Key internal relationships

- Reports to the Director initially, but will report to Senior Destitution Services Manager when post is recruited
- Works closely with Emergency Response Coordinator, Accommodation Manager, Senior Legal Officer, Senior Operations Manager and Detention Outreach Manager; will also need to form strong relationships with Senior Policy Officer and Communication and Development Manager

Specific responsibilities

People management

- Line manages Destitution Caseworker, Day Centre Officer and Advice and Support Assistant, other project staff and a range of volunteers from many varied backgrounds. (The postholder may be asked to line manage others as the organisation adapts to the circumstances of the pandemic.)
- Interviewing, inducting and ongoing support and training for volunteers, both in technical aspects of casework provision and JRS' ethos of accompaniment and holistic care, including via reflection meetings

- Build a community of volunteers within the team and support efforts to do so across the organisation
- Identify training needs for volunteers and other staff, and coordinate delivery of training via other members of JRS staff and external trainers.
- Ensure adequate pastoral supervision arrangements in place to support those doing direct accompaniment of refugees.

Casework management

- Lead case meetings with staff and volunteers responsible for providing support for people with complex issues of concern across both destitution services team and legal and detention outreach teams.
- Undertake casework (e.g., referral to other staff and services within JRS, to other agencies, non-regulated solicitor liaison).
- Supervise casework including spot checks
- Lead review of handling of casework including making recommendations around AQS adoption by JRS UK
- Ensure high standards of data recording for individuals, which is compliant with GDPR.
- Ensure ethos of accompaniment remains central to casework operation
- Work with Accommodation Manager (when appointed, or until then the At Home Coordinator) to ensure referrals to accommodation projects and develop referral systems, and integrated system with any new accommodation project.

Management of support networks

- Manage Day Centre Officer to run telephone Emotional Support Network through volunteers
- Post-COVID, develop and manage accompaniment network for volunteer companions for refugee friends (e.g. to accompany when reporting or at other events where such support may be appreciated, following grant of leave during transition to mainstream provision) and services (e.g. profile and nurturing support for collaborative initiatives promoting volunteering opportunities for refugees).

Liaison with other JRS teams

- Administer small grants schemes for hardship in conjunction with Emergency Response Team
- Oversee support for applications to grant providers providing grants for individual refugees in need
- Refer to JRS UK legal advice project and accommodation services in JRS

Financial management and grant reporting

- Manage budget for Day Centre, including discretionary grants to refugees, in consultation with Senior Destitution Services Manager.
- Ensure accurate monitoring of service provision and spend for grant reporting.
- Develop systems for measuring impact of services with Communications and Development Manager and ensure they are implemented.

Awareness raising, advocacy and networking

- Collaborate with the Senior Policy Officer and Communications and Development Manager to draw up external facing publications and articles to help raise awareness of the situation facing those we serve.
- Liaise with Destitution Forum, and other organisations providing services for destitute refugees, in conjunction with Senior Destitution Services Manager (when recruited).
- Public speaking on behalf of JRS at external facing events.

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.
- OISC accredited (at level 2, or working towards level 2)
- Detailed knowledge of the situation facing asylum seekers in the UK
- A minimum of 7 years' experience of work or volunteering in a similar area, including more than 5 years providing casework and advice
- Experience of working with people from varied backgrounds and faiths
- Experience of managing staff and track record of doing so effectively
- Experience of using online databases
- Experience managing volunteers
- Confidence to listen and respond to conversations led by refugees about spiritual needs, without proselytising or imposing personal perspectives
- Personal resilience to handle a high emotional load and support those in distress
- Ability to work flexibly as part of a small diverse team
- Outstanding interpersonal skills and the ability to build strong relationships with refugees and others within and without the organisation
- Outstanding communication skills in person and excellent written skills
- Able to reflect on experience and learn from it
- Commitment to ongoing personal growth and development.

Desirable

- OISC accreditation to level 3
- Experience of working in an AQS accredited organisation
- Experience of working or volunteering in a faith-based organisation or similar setting.

Duration: 12 month fixed-term contract; potentially renewable;

Location: JRS UK office, Hurtado Jesuit Centre, Wapping, London (Currently working from home but may be required to attend the office periodically for meetings. Phased return to work from our Hurtado Centre base likely during course of 2021. Postholder may need to undertake some travel within London to provide appointments for refugees from other locations.)

Salary: £31,000 – £35,000

Pension: Additional 10% of salary of employer's contribution

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