

Job Description: Destitution Caseworker

About JRS

The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) accompanies, serves and advocates alongside and for the rights of refugees and forcibly displaced people. JRS in the UK supports people made destitute by the asylum process through advice and casework, practical support, emotional befriending and accompaniment, a programme of creative and therapeutic activities, accommodation, and specialist legal advice. JRS UK also runs a detention outreach service supporting people detained for the administration of immigration procedures at Harmondsworth and Colnbrook, including befriending, social visiting, and casework support. JRS UK undertakes research for advocacy to policy makers, alongside communications and community outreach, 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 UK is based in the Hurtado Jesuit Centre in Wapping, East London. JRS UK currently has 26 full and part-time staff and around 100 volunteers, drawn from a wide variety of backgrounds, nationalities and generations; people of all faiths and none; including refugees, young graduates and vowed members of religious congregations. This diversity of perspectives and experience is a source of particular strength for JRS' work. We work collaboratively with JRS offices around the world, other Jesuit projects in the UK and many others in the Church and wider refugee sector.

A Global Mission

The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic organisation with a shared global mission to accompany, serve and advocate alongside and for the rights of refugees and forcibly displaced people. 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.

JRS' values and ways of working are rooted in Catholic Social Teaching and Jesuit (Ignatian) spirituality: JRS actively encourages reflective practice and participative decision-making at all levels of the organisation, as well as investment in, and care for our staff and volunteer teams.

JRS UK's work accompanying destitute asylum seekers

JRS UK has offered accompaniment, advice and support to appeals rights exhausted (ARE) asylum seekers across Greater London for over 30 years.

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 who are not only defined by their situation in immigration law; we come to know refugees as friends, rather than 'clients', 'beneficiaries', or 'service users'.

The JRS team build relationships with refugee friends over prolonged periods of time, as people navigate their legal limbo and the isolation that prolonged destitution can cause. JRS provides wrap-around support to over 300 refugee friends, with the destitution team offering advice and casework, supported by the practical offering of hardship payments, regular mobile phone top-ups, and a free shop/foodbank. The nature of prolonged destitution means vulnerable individuals have chronic needs, and dip in and out of moments of crisis.

Destitution Caseworker

The Destitution Caseworker is one of two full-time positions reporting to the Casework and Support Manager in a team that also includes a Befriending Coordinator, and volunteers.

This busy and varied role focuses on providing information, advice and casework, and practical and emotional support to ARE asylum seekers, who often struggle to self-advocate. The postholder will provide advice and support on a broad range of issues including destitution and homelessness; access to legal advice; asylum support and health-related matters. In addition to internal referrals to the JRS Legal and Accommodation teams, the postholder will utilise relationships with other NGOs and specialist agencies to ensure that individuals access timely and appropriate support. The postholder will be responsible for managing their own caseload and will support JRS' advocacy and policy work.

The postholder should have a good working knowledge of the issues and challenges faced by destitute asylum-seekers and refugees, with particular focus on homelessness and destitution and legal advice. They will need highly developed listening skills, personal resilience, and emotional maturity to respond to the emotional and practical needs of asylum seekers, accompany them and support them to progress with their lives. They need to have and maintain an up-to-date knowledge about the changing immigration and asylum context as it relates to our work and be able to apply that to situations affecting individuals in practice.

The Destitution Caseworker will need to integrate JRS UK's ethos of accompaniment in their approach and will be supported to develop this through team workshops and reflection mornings. Willingness to work collaboratively– building relationships and networks, within and outside of JRS – is essential.

Role Specific Responsibilities

Advice and Casework

- Identify, register, and assess needs of individuals
- Provide one-off information, advice, and support to individuals on a range of issues including homelessness, access to legal advice, destitution, and asylum support.
- Identify, prioritise and provide pro-active advice and casework support to individuals requiring ongoing accompaniment from JRS UK
- Facilitate access for individuals through signposting, referrals and ongoing advocacy to immigration and public law solicitors, and specialist agencies where appropriate
- Identify, prioritise, and refer individuals requiring ongoing emotional support to the Befriending and Activity projects
- Work closely with other teams particularly Practical Support, Legal and Accommodation teams to provide a holistic service
- Ensure hardship provisions are distributed and resources utilised in line with policies, guidance and procedures
- Maintain and develop positive working relationships and referral pathways with relevant statutory and third sector partners.
- Casework risks are identified, managed and/or escalated as appropriate
- Safeguarding concerns are identified and receive appropriate responses according to policies, procedures and good practice.
- Participate in monthly casework meetings
- Continuously maintain clear and accurate records in accordance with data protection legislation
- Non-legal form filling.
- Identify and raise common trends and issues affecting our work
- Attend regular sector meetings where appropriate
- Keep abreast of relevant developments in asylum/immigration law and procedures
- Ability to work outside normal office hours as required

General

- Support colleagues, volunteers and collaborate across teams and networks
- Identify opportunities for individuals to share their experiences and contribute to JRS UK's advocacy and communications work
- Rapidly identify risks and health and safety issues and escalate as appropriate
- Work with line manager and colleagues to identify and support service development and improvement
- Provide regular reports on advice and casework support
- Contribute to organisational development
- Undertake other related activities to support JRS' work
- Follows procedures, policies and guidance to ensure a safe, effective and efficient environment
- Comply with all JRS policies and procedures

Personal growth and development

- Engage with opportunities for training and development and reflect regularly on practice, including:
 - Ongoing training in areas such as asylum & immigration system, housing, mental health support/therapeutic care, rights and entitlements of those we serve.
 - attend non-managerial supervision and psychological support.
 - Workshops and trainings relating to JRS' mission and ethos
 - Participation in team reflection mornings

Equal Opportunities

JRS is committed to encouraging and recruiting candidates from refugee and migrant backgrounds to ensure our staff teams reflect those we serve. We particularly welcome applications from people with lived experience of detention and the UK asylum system.

The successful candidate will be offered the job subject to references and a DBS check.

Person Specification

Essential

- Sympathy and congruence with the values of JRS and commitment to JRS' mission of accompaniment, service and advocacy alongside and on behalf of refugees.
- Highly developed listening skills, empathy and sensitivity for one-on-one work (in person and by phone) with vulnerable individuals
- High level of personal resilience and emotional maturity for working closely with people in distress
- Outstanding interpersonal skills and the ability to build strong relationships with asylum seekers and others within and without the organisation
- Experience of working with refugees, vulnerable migrants or other marginalised groups
- Experience or desire to work with people from diverse backgrounds and faiths
- An understanding of the immigration and asylum system including the asylum support system, legislation relating to rights and entitlements regarding asylum seekers and issues affecting asylum seekers and refugees.
- Experience of undertaking casework with vulnerable individuals
- Experience of managing a busy workload with tight deadlines
- Ability to draft correspondence and keep notes in clear, concise and accurate English
- IT literacy and competency with Word, Excel and databases
- Ability to work flexibly and collaboratively as part of a small and varied team
- Ability to work outside normal office hours from time to time, as required (for which time off in lieu will be given)
- Commitment to ongoing personal growth and development
- Commitment to principles underlying equal opportunities

Desirable

- OISC level 1, or similar advice accreditation
- Lived experience of the immigration system
- Experience of working or volunteering in a faith-based organisation or community organisation
- Experience of conducting needs assessments, providing high quality advice and casework support to vulnerable individuals, and maintaining clear and accurate records
- Familiarity with working with people experiencing mental health challenges
- Experience of using Lamplight database
- Knowledge of an additional language which is relevant to the refugee communities we serve
- Detailed knowledge of the immigration and asylum system
- Experience of managing and working with volunteers

Hours:	Full-time (37.5 hours); job share, or part-time options would be considered
Duration:	18-month fixed-term contract, which may be extendable, subject to funding.
Location:	JRS UK Office, Hurtado Jesuit Centre, Wapping, London, E1W 2QT Opportunity for some hybrid/home working
Salary:	£26k to £32k per annum depending on experience
Pension:	Additional 10% of salary of employer's contribution

We encourage applications from people who have first-hand experience of the UK asylum or immigration system.

To apply: please send your CV and covering letter outlining how you meet the job description to Casework and Support Manager, Ria Katche, miriam.katche@jrs.net

We welcome informal conversations about this role, please do contact Ria to arrange a call.

You must be permitted to work in the UK. JRS UK is not able to obtain a work visa for this post.