

Job Description:

Destitution Casework Assistant

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 29 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 holistic 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 Casework Assistant

Specific Responsibilities

The Destitution Casework Assistant is a new full-time post on an 18-month contract, supporting JRS UK's accompaniment, service and advocacy on behalf of those made destitute by the asylum process. The post is one of several connected changes at JRS UK intended to enable us to increase our capacity to provide quality advice and support to refugees through our mission to accompany.

Reporting to and working closely with the Senior Destitution Caseworker, this busy and varied role focuses on providing a safe, high quality, efficient and compassionate service for refugees we serve. The post holder will need to be a strong team player, supporting colleagues in the Destitution Services team to provide holistic advice, casework support and accompaniment to refugee friends at the JRS office in Wapping, East London.

The post-holder 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 volunteers to do the same. They need to maintain an up-to-date knowledge about the immigration and asylum context as it relates to our work with destitute refugees and be able to apply that to situations affecting individuals in practice. Having a background in frontline work and being comfortable working with volunteers will be an asset but not essential.

The Destitution Casework Assistant will need enthusiasm for working in a small faith-based organisation and a willingness to integrate JRS UK's ethos of accompaniment with their approach to the role (for which training, and support will be provided), while at the same time having the sensitivity to respond to the needs of destitute people with varied faith backgrounds, serving all without discrimination or favour.

Internal relationships:

- Reports directly to the Senior Destitution Caseworker
- Works closely with the Legal team, Communications team and Destitution team, including Accommodation team.

Casework:

- Undertake registrations of individuals and assess whether they may be eligible for our services.
- Carry out casework related tasks with refugee friends in relation to access to healthcare; destitution and housing; education and employment; welfare and benefits where necessary.
- Apply for destitution grants for those we serve under supervision.
- Facilitate access for individuals through signposting and referrals to immigration and public law solicitors, and specialist agencies where appropriate.
- Follow up on casework appointments, which might include liaising with colleagues, medical professionals, legal representatives, and other third-party organisations, as agreed with Senior Destitution Caseworker.
- Identify and quickly escalated risks appropriately.
- Accompany individuals to appointments where necessary.
- Participate in case meetings with other staff and volunteers responsible for providing support for people with complex needs.
- Undertake support reviews to re-assess needs.
- Encourage, support, and empower individuals to participate in aspects of their support and casework where possible.
- Keep accurate records of all casework undertaken.
- Ability to work, safely, outside normal office hours as required (time off in lieu will be provided)

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.
- 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 DBS check.

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.
- Highly developed listening skills and empathy for one-on-one work.
- Understanding of the challenges faced by destitute asylum-seekers.
- High levels of personal resilience and emotional maturity for working closely with people in distress.
- Discretion, tact and sensitivity.
- Ability to work flexibly as part of a small and varied team.
- Ability to maintain professional boundaries and provide support within set parameters.
- Ability to maintain enthusiasm for a high level of contact with refugees and vulnerable migrants.
- Experience of working with people from varied backgrounds and faiths.
- Outstanding oral and written communication skills.
- Computer literacy: competent IT skills with Word, Excel and willingness to learn to use other databases.
- Commitment to ongoing personal growth and development.
- Ability to reflect on experience and learn from it.

Desirable

- Experience of working or volunteering in a faith-based organisation or similar setting.
- Experience of working with refugees and migrants.
- Lived experience of the UK immigration system.
- Experience of advice and/or casework.
- Knowledge of communities and service providers dedicated to supporting migrants.

Hours:	Full-time (37.5 hours)
Duration:	18-months, with potential to renew
Location:	JRS UK Office, Hurtado Jesuit Centre, Wapping, London, E1W 2QT Opportunity for some hybrid/home working.
Salary:	£25,000 - £28,000 per annum depending on experience
Pension:	Additional 10% of salary of employer's contribution

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

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