

VOLUNTEER TASK DESCRIPTION

Refugee Integration Advice Volunteer

- Location:** The Refugee Council head office in Stratford, London, E15 1NS
- Time commitment:** 1 full day per week, 09.45 – 17:00 or 2 half days per week, 09:45 – 13:00 or 14:00 – 17:00. We would like all volunteers who join as a Refugee Integration Advice Volunteer to join with the intention of staying for at least 6 months.
- Responsible to:** Integration Project Casework Coordinators
- Main role:** To support clients in the so-called 'move-on period', helping them make the transition from being an asylum seeker to being a refugee.

The Refugee Council is one of the leading organisations in the UK working with refugees and people seeking asylum. We not only give help and support, but also work with clients to ensure their needs and concerns are voiced and addressed. Volunteers are a key part of many of the services that support our clients and work alongside paid staff across the organisation.

About Refugee Integration team

The Refugee Integration team work with clients who have recently been granted refugee status by the Home Office. Asylum support allowance and accommodation will usually come to an end following 28 days of being granted status (the so-called move-on period), so this is a crucial time to support refugees who are now struggling to rebuild their lives in a new and unfamiliar country. Many need advice and guidance in areas such as housing, health, welfare support, education/training and employment. The team consists of Casework Coordinators within the Refugee Advice Project who provide casework support to individual clients and families helping them make the transition from being an asylum seeker to being a refugee and on a wide range of integration issues. The team also consists of Casework Coordinators who work with clients who are at risk of becoming homeless as a result of being granted protection in the UK following 28 days of being granted status. The team provide drop-in property search sessions for help finding affordable accommodation, advice and support to help you sustaining a tenancy and advice on training and employment.

The volunteer role

Volunteers will have the opportunity to volunteer closely with a team of experienced Casework Coordinators within the Refugee Advice and Private Rented Scheme projects with tasks including:

- To provide telephone advice about welfare and housing rights to refugee clients, including assistance with filling forms, liaising with government agencies and council offices, drafting letters, etc.
- To research housing options for our clients and developing an up to date list of landlords, agencies and schemes
- To reply to telephone and email enquiries by taking referrals or signposting people
- To ensure information provided to clients are clearly communicated, and with language skills and/ or interpreters, in a language that those contacting the service can understand
- To update client information on the organisation's database in an accurate manner, in line with project processes (full training will be provided).
- To work effectively with colleagues in the Engage project team
- To maintain a high standard of record keeping and correspondence on the organisation's client database (Inform).
- To follow direction from supervisors, and to promote best practice regarding working with refugees, and deliver a sensitive, confidential, appropriate and professional service.

Useful skills and experience

- An interest in refugee issues and willingness to learn about the welfare and housing rights of refugees
- Experience of, or demonstrable interest in, volunteering or working with asylum seekers and refugees
- Intermediate computer skills, in particular ability to use Outlook, Microsoft Teams, navigate the internet and use the organisations' database (training will be provided)
- Good command of written and spoken English, and good telephone manner
- Punctuality and reliability. The service relies on volunteers to run appointments
- Commitment to equal opportunities
- Experience of volunteering or working with vulnerable people is desirable
- Ability to communicate in another language would be of benefit but not essential
- Ability to deal sensitively to often complicated and traumatic issues.
- No prior experience of advice provision is required, but attendance to training is mandatory.

This role is subject to a satisfactory basic level Disclosure and Barring Service check. Repeat checks are initiated every two years.

Skills and experience to be gained from the role

- Improve your skills volunteering in a busy, frontline project
- Volunteer directly with a team of experienced Caseworkers and Integration Advisors
- Firsthand experience of supporting vulnerable clients with complex circumstances
- Learn more about the life of refugees in the UK
- Knowledge, experience and application of the rights and entitlements for refugees
- Directly impact and work with refugee clients to build a life and integrate within the UK

How we support our volunteers

Volunteers are valued members of our teams and we provide them with support and development opportunities. Volunteers will receive regular planned support sessions with their supervisors.

Refugee Council allows volunteers to attend our professional training courses when possible, free of charge. Training will be discussed with you during support sessions with your supervisor.

Volunteers will be given IT access and a Refugee Council email address whilst volunteering on this project.

Through sponsorship from the Marsh Trust, Refugee Council also provides volunteers with the opportunity to design and set-up a new service for new clients. There will be an opportunity to discuss this with your supervisor.

Volunteer roles are unpaid, but we can reimburse volunteers for lunch and travel costs. (Unfortunately, our limited budget only allows for local travelling costs.)

Unanswered questions?

For more information contact Shana de Silva on 07392 866351

Email: Integration.volunteering@refugeecouncil.org.uk

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Health & Safety

The volunteer is responsible for:

Cooperating with the Refugee Council in delivering all legal responsibilities in respect of your own and your colleagues, volunteers, clients and others health and safety whilst at work.

Becoming familiar with the Refugee Council's Health & Safety Policy and procedures including evacuation procedures at your workplace.

Carrying out risk assessments of your own work and especially of your own workstation to ensure that you do not expose yourself or others to unnecessary risk.

Equal Opportunities Statement

As part of its recruitment policy, the Refugee Council intends to ensure that no prospective or actual employee or volunteer is discriminated against on the basis of sex, race, nationality, marital status, sexual orientation, employment status, class, disability, age, religious belief or political persuasion, or is disadvantaged by any condition or requirement which is not demonstrably justifiable.