



Advocacy & Casework Volunteer

Hackney Migrant Centre

Hackney Migrant Centre (HMC) delivers a free, weekly advice and support service for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees who have immigration, housing, welfare and health issues. We support visitors to resolve their immigration status and move out of homelessness and destitution in the long-term, as well as addressing immediate issues in the short term, such as poverty relief and access to healthcare. The majority of our visitors lack immigration status and are destitute as a result of the Hostile Environment. HMC's work is informed by a vision of a UK where no one is forced into destitution, exploitation or vulnerability as a result of their immigration or citizenship status.

Role Description

Hackney Migrant Centre is looking for new advocacy and casework volunteers to help run our Advice Service on Wednesdays. In this role, you will conduct the initial needs assessment for new visitors, as well as supporting them throughout the day with administrative tasks and casework support. Our visitors come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds and are often in very vulnerable situations; it is therefore important that our volunteers can work with understanding and sensitivity. Most importantly, we depend on volunteers to provide a welcoming and friendly service for visitors.

Main responsibilities will include:

- Needs assessment of new visitors, taking detailed case histories and identifying support needs.
- Providing advocacy and support to visitors including making telephone calls, writing letters and emails, and completing forms to legal firms, the Home Office, local authorities and others.
- Supporting the work of professional advisers.
- Providing financial support and immediate poverty relief by writing small grant applications, arranging foodbank vouchers, signposting to relevant charities & other support services etc.
- Various administrative and practical tasks to help facilitate the smooth running of the session.
- Attending the debrief at the end of the session 4:00-4.45pm.

You will:

- Develop / improve your advocacy and casework skills.
- Develop specialised knowledge of the UK immigration system, destitution, homelessness and NRPF issues, as well as broader knowledge of immigration and housing issues affecting our visitors.
- Gain experience of working within a small, frontline, charitable organisation.

Personal specification (E – essential, D – desirable):

- Ability to record clear, detailed and accurate notes (E)
- Willingness to listen to the concerns of the centre's service users (E)
- Ability to communicate sensitively and empathetically with people with a history of trauma / facing severe hardship (E)
- Experience of working with vulnerable people with immigration/housing issues (D)
- Knowledge of immigration law relevant to migrants/asylum seekers/refugees (D)

We can offer:

- Internal induction & training on immigration and housing issues
- Shadowing an experienced volunteer until you're ready to work independently
- Ongoing supervision and support
- Access to relevant external training opportunities
- Support with CV writing and job applications

Commitment

We ask for a minimum commitment of 6 months, for at least two Wednesday sessions per month. You will be required to work in person at our centre at St Mary's Church, Stoke Newington. Whilst volunteering, you will be provided with a cooked lunch and reimbursement for your travel expenses if required.

Application

If you are interested in applying, please download and complete our application form and return to Sarah Hull at: sarahh@hackneymigrantcentre.org.uk

We welcome volunteers from all backgrounds & walks of life; we especially encourage those with lived experience of migration to apply.

If you need any support making this application or have any questions about the application form, questions or process, please get in touch with Sarah using the email above. The application deadline is 05/10/2021. We aim to start responding to applicants by the end of the week at the earliest.