



**Care4Calais** / [www.care4calais.org](http://www.care4calais.org) / [annie@care4calais.org](mailto:annie@care4calais.org)

Supporting Refugees in the UK

## General advice and guidance on what to do

### What support do refugees need?

Donations of clothes, shoes and phones, help with paperwork or local public transport, English lessons, and a friendly face!

### How to provide this support as a volunteer?

1. Care4Calais gets numerous requests for support from across the UK. We have set up local groups in many areas and are creating more every day. These are organised via closed facebook groups. To get involved, email [annie@care4calais.org](mailto:annie@care4calais.org)
2. Please make sure you link up with other volunteers in your area and support each other where possible. To coordinate with your local group, organise a Zoom Meeting - get to know each other and you'll find it easier to organise the best approach.
3. Head to the hotel that needs support and meet the refugees. Please try to use the refugee contacts we have to meet others - there can be up to 300 refugees in one hotel so don't limit yourself to the ones you know. This is really important so we can provide the most help to as many people as possible.
4. Meet the staff at the hotel. This is very useful if you need to ask them any questions, or raise any concerns you have about treatment or provisions. You may find they want an identification letter to show you are affiliated with a charity. Please contact [annie@care4calais.org](mailto:annie@care4calais.org) for this.
5. Some of the hotels are resistant to volunteers entering. It is very much worth persevering in trying to build a relationship as we have had fantastic results with this. Read [this](#) case study for an example. Other ways we have achieved things is through working with local community

centres, churches and mosques to distribute resources at their premises, and meet refugees and provide English classes there.

6. Collect and distribute clothing donations. One of the main things needed is clothing and shoes as many people at the hotels only have the clothes they arrived in. There are a number of ways to collect clothing, including through your own contacts, friends and family, or your local community. Read [this](#) case study for an example. Please make sure the clothing is good quality!
7. It's a good idea to set up a shared google document to track any donations that are given to individual refugees. This will help stop volunteers doubling up and some people being given more things than others.
8. We strongly recommend that you do not use refugees to distribute things for you. This can put them under stress and leave them open to pressure from others, even if you do not see it. However, it is great to ask them for translation help and get them to introduce you to other people so you widen your circle.
9. **Fundraising and purchasing** - Please read our [guidance](#) for lots of helpful hints and tips on raising money and getting great deals when you buy things.
10. If the **food** being served to refugees is not suitable for people with certain medical conditions, not nutritious or not culturally appropriate, you need to raise this with the hotel or accommodation provider. You can help with this through petitioning, and speaking to both the hotel manager and the Home Office team's manager or the accommodation provider. In the short term you may want to support individuals with medical conditions by buying them some food or putting them in contact with local community organisations who can likely help, but the responsibility for feeding people is with the hotels. We have also had success with local businesses donating fresh fruit and snacks to supplement the hotel food.
11. **English lessons** are one of the most important things to help someone integrate and feel at home in the UK. You can help by introducing them to many online learning options ([www.care4calais.org/language-lessons](http://www.care4calais.org/language-lessons)). We may also be able to organise online tutors - email [annie@care4calais.org](mailto:annie@care4calais.org) for details. If you can get someone to come in and run English workshops this would be incredibly valuable. We can help by providing resources and we know the people we support would be extremely grateful. When we have done surveys with refugees the number one requested service is always English lessons.
12. **Phones** might be needed. Post in your local Facebook groups/chats and see if you can organise getting some phones donated.
13. **Sim cards** - We have sim cards we can distribute with credit already preloaded. Please email [annie@care4calais.org](mailto:annie@care4calais.org) to get some posted to you to distribute.
14. Some of our local groups have organised weekly football matches with everyone at the hotel - you could organise one too or another similar activity!

15. **Lawyers** - Do any of the refugees need help finding a lawyer? If they need a lawyer, ask them to send you photographs of all papers given to them by the Home Office (or take photos yourself). Then send these, together with the refugee's contact details, to WhatsApp on +447519 773268 or via email on [access@care4calais.org](mailto:access@care4calais.org). (Note WhatsApp best for big files.)
  16. **Medical Care** - Asylum seekers are entitled to free medical and dental care in the UK. They do not need documents or proof of asylum status to register for care, but they may need to fill in some forms. You can find more details and guidance at [www.care4calais.org/medical-advice](http://www.care4calais.org/medical-advice)
  17. For easy to understand information and advice on the **asylum process**, see the [Right to Remain -Toolkit](#)
  18. The following free legal advice helpline is very good: 020 7553 7470. It is open on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays between 10am and 1pm. The helpline is free and confidential. More information here: [JCWI: Our Helplines](#).
  19. If there's anything else we can do to help, please let us know, as there may be other groups doing similar things. Feel free to use our [Care4Calais Volunteer Chat](#) page too if you are looking to collect certain items.
  20. **If you get new contacts who need help, but you are unable to provide it or are not local to them, please let us know, as we have other amazing volunteers/groups across the UK, so we will be able to get help to them!**
-