



Care4Calais / www.care4calais.org / ukadmin@care4calais.org

Supporting Refugees in the UK

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 can we 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 ukadmin@care4calais.org
2. We encourage volunteers to coordinate and support each other where possible. Zoom Meetings can provide a great way of getting to know each other and organising the best approach.
3. **Head to the hotel that needs support and meet the refugees.** We can 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 identification to show you are affiliated with a charity, and we can provide this following registration.
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 achievements in developing local support have been made through working with local community centres, churches and mosques to distribute resources at their premises, and to 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 ask 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** - We have lots of helpful hints and tips on raising money and getting great deals when you buy things. Guidance can be accessed following registration as a volunteer.
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 online learning options. We may also be able to organise online and face-to-face classes. If you can get someone to come in and run English workshops, this would be incredibly valuable. We can help by providing resources here, 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. We are sometimes able to provide these; email the local group or ukadmin@care4calais.org to find out.
13. **Sim Cards** - We have sim cards we can distribute with credit already preloaded. Please email your local group to enquire.
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. **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.

16. **Lawyers** - Do any of the refugees need help finding a lawyer? Our Legal Access Team may be able to help, and can be contacted via WhatsApp at +447519773268.
 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: <https://www.jcwi.org.uk/advice-services>.
 19. If there's anything else we can do to help, please let us know, as there may be other groups doing similar things.
 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. We have other amazing volunteers/groups across the UK - we will try and get help to them!**
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