

GUIDANCE FOR CARE4CALAIS UK GROUPS

Most of us know *what* we do at Care4Calais. Group values help clarify *how* we carry out our important work and volunteering. This helps us to work in the same way, to the same end goals, and to work most effectively together.

Key objectives for UK groups

- *Help as many refugees as possible* - there are now nearly 10,000 asylum seekers in hotels and barracks around the UK, all in need of support and friendship. We want to help as many as possible, so with limited volunteer numbers we need to think about how we can be as *efficient* and *effective* as possible.
- *Help the ones who need it most* - often the people who are the most confident, or can speak english, or who are smart enough to seek us out and message us, are the one who get help first. But it is often the ones with no skills or confidence that need the most help. We need to ensure we are reaching them all rather than just the people who ask us for help.
- *Be sustainable* - we need to make our work sustainable so it can continue. Most unfortunately this situation is not going away soon. We want to avoid volunteer burn out.
- *Be seen to be fair* - perceptions of fairness and having a system that works are crucially important. We might not see it, but if people feel that there is unfairness we can leave behind tensions that cause problems for everyone. If we are seen to have a system that is consistent and fair everyone will be calmer and happier.

SO HOW DO WE ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES?

Be Inclusive

- Include as many volunteers as possible. More volunteers can help more people - its that simple. So encourage more people to get involved.
- If you work as a team you can reach more people – four individuals might help four people each, but a team of four working together could help 100 people.
- Give everyone roles and responsibilities so they know what they need to do and feel included and clear on what they can contribute.
- Allocate out tasks – don't let everything fall to just a few people (or even one person!). That person will quickly burn out.
- Have regular zoom calls – work as a team.

Share positivity (communication is good)

- Put lots of positive updates in the Facebook group – tell everyone what’s going on and what’s going well.
- Make people feel involved and share good news.
- Keep on inviting people to come to distributions and get involved in activities by publicising them in advance in your Facebook group.
- Make it easy for new or nervous people to get involved – make them feel welcome eg. have a welcome message for new joiners of facebook group
- Keep on telling people where to find resources (C4C website) - this will increase their confidence as they will have the tools to do the job.
- Get someone from your group to attend the interagency meetings to keep updated with all relevant information, and share this with the rest of your group.

Maximise the benefits to refugees

- Try to reach as many refugees as possible – don’t fall into a rut of just helping the ones you know. Be brave, talk to new people - reach out, again and again.
- It might feel easier just to visit the hotel but it’s better for the refugees and for us to find an offsite location. The refugees are in the hotel 24/7 and it’s so much better for their mental health to have a safe space outside of the hotel to visit. Also, the hotels are essentially run by the Home Office and its better for us not to be under their control. Look for local churches, community centres, mosques etc to partner with.
- As much as possible try to avoid multiple trips to visit individuals each week. Volunteer burn out helps no one in the end. Except in emergencies, the ideal practice would be for people to know that volunteers will be at X location at Y time each week and individual asylum seekers with requests should be directed to go there to meet the volunteers. Volunteers running round to meet individual needs is unsustainable and will limit the number of people who can be helped overall.
- Follow and share the care4calais distribution guidance - we've been doing this for a long time.
- Keep a shared list of everything you have given out to avoid duplication and unfairness, eg. a shared google sheet, and make sure you use people's real legal names not just the names they tell you. Always use the C4C distribution method for mobile phones.
- Its great to work with the refugees and have them ‘volunteer’ with us – but ensure there are safeguards in place. A refugee should never be able to make decisions over who gets what; this must be done by C4C volunteers. There is too much potential for refugees to come under pressure when we are not there – either pressure to favour people who are friends or who are stronger, or pressure because

they did not favour people and because they are scrupulously fair. It is essential that we protect them from this.

Be professional

- Wear your C4C lanyard and ID at all times.
- Think about the impact of receiving charity on people's dignity - no one likes being in this position. How can we make it easier for them?
- Find out who is the designated welfare office and safeguarding lead for your hotel.