**Volunteer Visitor Role Description**

**Detention Action**

Detention Action is a small NGO working at the frontline of human rights in the UK. We rely on the work of volunteers to deliver much needed support and information to people in immigration detention centres. We provide emotional and practical support to people detained in the two immigration detention centres near Heathrow, and to people detained under immigration powers in prisons across the UK.

**Applying to be a volunteer**

There are three steps to the recruitment of our volunteers. Each step is used to assess the suitability of the applicant for the role they are applying for.

1)    Application form – please [complete an application form](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeoiAK7tYJFemsOm_29Nx1HFPlpJ532SmaUd2kYSVbakr4mxQ/viewform?usp=header) before the deadline.  
2)    Interview – interviews take place from 10am – 4pm remotely, over zoom. This is an informal space where we can find out more about you and you can find out more about Detention Action and ask questions about the role. There will usually be two people on the interview panel.   
3)    Training – the induction training takes place one weekday evening, and will be a remote training over zoom.

**Please take some time to read our website and the role description before completing the application form. Consider how your skills and experience are relevant to the role and to the work that Detention Action does.**

If you anticipate any specific barriers that may impact your volunteering with us, please discuss these with your Supervisor.

We strongly encourage applications from people with lived experience of immigration detention and/or hostile immigration systems.

If you would like to discuss the application process or have a question about the forms, please call us on 020 7226 3114, or email us and we can arrange a time for a chat about the role.

**Volunteer Visitor Role Description**

**Purpose of the post:** To provide emotional support to a person in immigration detention by visiting them in Harmondsworth / Colnbrook IRCs.

**Report to:** Casework Coordinator

**Commitment:** 1 visit every 7-10 days for **9 months.**

If there are barriers to you volunteering with us for this length of time, we may also be able to consider a 6 month commitment, please explain why you would need this in your application. We will prioritise applicants who can make a longer commitment.

**Duties include:**

* To provide emotional support, by using active listening skills and developing trust with the person you are visiting
* To explain Detention Action’s services to the person visited during the first visit or as needed, including the limits of our remit (e.g. we cannot provide legal advice)
* To contact the person you are visiting over the phone as soon as possible to introduce yourself and arrange a visit within a week of being given their contact details
* To complete the feedback form after each visit and return it your supervisor as soon as possible
* To immediately seek guidance and advice from your supervisor if any difficulty arises or you are unsure about how to proceed
* To report immediately to your supervisor if the person you are visiting has been transferred to another removal centre or removed
* To alert your supervisor or Harmondsworth or Colnbrook staff if it is felt that the person you are visiting is at serious risk of self-harm (please see Suicide Guidelines provided in Induction Training). We will provide full training on this before you start.
* To attend volunteer meetings and trainings to support other volunteers and develop your skills and knowledge (optional)
* To attend at least one supervision during your time as a volunteer
* To inform your supervisor of any change in your availability as soon as possible
* To comply with Detention Action’s Safeguarding, Confidentiality and Data Protection Policies to protect your own and others’ health, safety and welfare.

**Volunteer Development**

* We will do our best to ensure that volunteers are fully supported by their Supervisor with regular check-ins and debriefs where we discuss how you are finding the role and how you would like to grow at Detention Action.
* There will be the possibility to try different volunteer roles as you build your confidence and knowledge.
* We will provide regular training to allow you to carry out your role.
* We will expense any costs that you may incur as a result of volunteering, in line with our expenses policy.
* We can provide a reference for future applications on completion of the volunteer commitment.

# Volunteer Visitor Person Specification

## Post: Volunteer Visitor

**Report to:** Casework Coordinator

### Essential Knowledge and Experience

1. Knowledge and understanding of the aims and principles of Detention Action

2. Experience of supporting people with emotional needs. This can be experience gained in a professional or voluntary capacity, or from your own personal experiences.

3. A willingness to learn about the asylum system, immigration detention in the UK and the issues faced by people who migrate to the UK.

**Desirable Knowledge**

1. Knowledge of a language commonly spoken by the people we support (including, but not limited to, Arabic, Albanian, Bengali, Urdu, Hindu, Punjabi, Pashto, Farsi, Dari, Kurdish Sorani, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Russian, Polish, Romania, Lithuanian or Tamil)

**Essential Skills**

Ability and commitment to regularly visit someone detained at Harmondsworth Removal Centre or Colnbrook Removal Centre every seven to ten days and maintain contact with Detention action office for at least six months.

Ability and commitment to attend Detention Action Induction Training before starting.

Ability to use active listening skills to emotionally support detainees in a one-to-one setting in a non-judgmental, non-discriminatory, sensitive and empathic manner.

Ability to complete feedback form accurately and return it to Detention Action promptly after each visit and seek advice and guidance from the Supervisor or other staff when necessary.

Excellent communication skills - ability to communicate with Detention Action staff, Harmondsworth Removal Centre staff, Colnbrook Removal Centre staff and, when necessary, liaise with other organisations and individuals on behalf of the person supported in clear English

Excellent interpersonal skills – ability to relate to individuals from different backgrounds and cultures and willingness to understand their situations.

Ability to attend volunteer training sessions regularly and to contribute to the running of the organisation in a constructive manner.

Ability to act in accordance with Detention Action policies at all times, particularly Code of Conduct, Confidentiality and Equal Opportunities Policies.

**PRIVACY NOTICE FOR VOLUNTEERS**

**Volunteering Applicants**

**What data we process and why**

Detention Action processes the personal data that you provide as part of the recruitment process for any given role. This includes information you provide in your application form and throughout the recruitment process, such as during an interview, or information provided by your referee. This may include sensitive information, for example about your health, if you choose to disclose such information to us.

We need to know this information so that we can communicate with you about the recruitment process and volunteering with Detention Action. We will not keep any personal data from you that we do not need as part of the recruitment process. Only the person administering the recruitment and individuals on the recruitment panel will have access to your application.

Detention Action operates a blind recruitment process, so your personal details will only be shared with the recruitment panel if you are invited to interview.

**How long we keep this data**

* If you are not invited to an interview, your application will be archived then deleted 6 months after the finalisation of the recruitment in which you participated.
* If you are invited for an interview, we keep your application for 1 year after the finalisation of the recruitment in which you participated.
* If you are successful in the recruitment and begin volunteering with us, your application will form part of your volunteer record *(see section on Volunteers)*.

### Volunteers

**What data we process and why**

Detention Action processes the personal data that you provide as part of the recruitment process to become a volunteer. This includes information you provide in your application form, at interview, and any information provided by your referee(s). This may include sensitive information, for example about your health, if you choose to disclose such information to us. We need to know this information so that we can communicate with you about volunteering at Detention Action and as part of the recruitment process. We will not keep any personal data from you that we do not need as part of the recruitment process.

While you are volunteering with us, we also process personal data you give us through the supervision and support we provide for you. It is important that we process this data so that we can communicate with you and support and supervise you effectively, as well as so that we can continue to develop and improve how we manage volunteers. If you ask us to be a referee, we will also need this data to provide a reference for you.

**How long we keep this data**

We will keep your data for as long as you remain a volunteer with us, and then for 6 years from the end of the financial year in which you stop volunteering with us. This is to allow us to comply with our legal and financial obligations.