



Lesbian Immigration Support group (LISG) Volunteer Policy

LISG Mission

- To provide support to lesbian and bisexual women based in Greater Manchester who are either seeking to claim asylum in the UK, or who are refugees.
- To provide a safe space for lesbian and bisexual women who have experienced trauma and sex related violence.
- To provide a social network offering emotional support to members who are both lesbian and bisexual women currently applying for asylum, and those refugees granted leave to stay in the UK.
- To provide practical support and assistance to members with current asylum applications based on sexuality.
- To ensure our members are treated equally and with dignity during the asylum process.
- To raise awareness of the specific issues faced by lesbian asylum seekers.

LISG Volunteers

All LISG services and activities are delivered and managed by volunteers. All our volunteers are women. Without our volunteers LISG would not exist. This policy sets out how we recruit and support our volunteers.

Who volunteers for LISG?

Due to the nature of our services, and in line with exceptions allowed within the Equality Act 2010, we have an all-female volunteer workforce.

A volunteer is any individual who undertakes unpaid activities on behalf of our organisation of their own free choice.

Volunteers may be involved in short or long-term activities or as a one off. Typical activities may include:

- Supporting fundraising or awareness raising events
- Involvement in direct delivery of our services and projects
- Undertaking finance or administration duties
- Being part of our board of trustees

Roles and Responsibilities

The volunteer role is based on trust and mutual understanding. There is no contractual obligation for the volunteer to attend or to undertake particular tasks. However, there is an expectation of mutual support and reliability:



Volunteers can expect:

- To have clear information about what is and is not expected of them
- To receive support
- To be insured and to volunteer in a safe environment
- To be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner
- To receive reimbursement for reasonable expenses
- To be recognised and appreciated
- To be able to say 'no' to anything which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable
- To know what to do if something goes wrong

The organisation expects volunteers:

- To be reliable, open and honest
- To uphold the organisation's values and comply with organisational policies
- To contribute positively to the aims of the organisation and avoid bringing the organisation into disrepute
- To carry out tasks within agreed guidelines
- To adhere to LISG's confidentiality policy at all times

Recruitment

Recruitment will usually involve:

- a role description
- a standard application form
- an informal interview
- the taking of references

(Some roles may require further checks such as DBS checks which will be undertaken in accordance with the latest guidance.)

Where it is reasonable to do so we will be flexible with the tasks within role descriptions.

Where applicants are not able to be placed as a volunteer within LISG they will be given feedback, if requested

Any new roles for volunteers must be agreed with the Trustees in advance.

Induction and Training

Volunteers will receive an induction which will include:

- 1) An introduction to other volunteers and the work of the organisation
- 2) An introduction to the members at the regular members meeting



- 3) A discussion about the individual volunteer's role, what their next steps are and to agree what support they will need/receive
- 4) A copy and explanation of LISG policies and procedures
- 5) Information on what expenses can be claimed and how to claim them

Ongoing Support

We hold monthly volunteer meetings where volunteers, not only plan and co-ordinate the day-to-day activities of the organisation, but also provide peer support.

In addition, as a new volunteer you will be paired with an existing volunteer for on-going support and mentoring. How support will be provided will be agreed at the induction meeting. This could be regular meetings or ad hoc support as needed.

Confidentiality

All volunteers are bound by the LISG Confidentiality policy. Breach of confidentiality is taken very seriously and may result in us asking the volunteer to leave.

We are bound by the Data Protection Act to ensure that we treat volunteer and member information with respect. Only the trustees and volunteers who need to see information for purposes related to volunteer or member involvement will be able to access it. We will not pass information on without permission.

Expenses

It is the policy of LISG to reimburse relevant volunteer's expenses on production of receipts or proof of travel payments.

Car mileage expenses will be reimbursed in line with the current rates paid by HMRC (currently 45p per mile) up to a distance of 20 miles per volunteering session (£8.00 maximum).

Problem-solving Procedure

LISG acknowledges that sometimes problems do arise. In the first instance, any volunteer with a complaint or concern should bring it up with one of the trustees. If not resolved by informal discussion, concerns or complaints can be sent to the trustees in writing for consideration.



Health and Safety

LISG appreciates that all volunteers have the right to volunteer in a safe environment and will endeavour to provide one. Volunteers must carry out their duties in line with agreed health and safety procedures.

Volunteers are covered by LISG's Public Liability Insurance but if they wish to use their car to carry out any aspect of their volunteering role, the onus is on the volunteer to notify their insurance company to ensure that they are covered on their vehicle insurance.

Diversity

LISG is very sensitive to different cultures, lifestyles, backgrounds and languages and strives to ensure equality of opportunity to ensure that individuals are given equal access to information and services within the scope of our services (lesbian or bi-sexual women seeking asylum or with settled refugee status). We require all volunteers to follow these principles. We will strive to provide extra support and make reasonable adjustments, if needed, for volunteers with additional needs including disability, language or mental health.