

Volunteer Code of Conduct

We are committed to providing the highest possible standard of support to the people we work alongside, and we have a responsibility to ensure that our actions do not expose them to further harm. This Code of Conduct is informed by professional humanitarian principles and supported by our Safeguarding Policy.

- **Avoid attachment.** Volunteers are expected to be warm and respectful while maintaining appropriate professional boundaries. Forming personal friendships can make it difficult to treat everyone equally and may cause harm when volunteers move on. In practice, this means no socialising outside the Centre and no personal goodbyes.
- **Be courteous, kind and respectful.** This is fundamental to creating a welcoming environment.
- **Do not intervene in physical violence.** Volunteers must not intervene in any physical altercations. Notify the Coordinator immediately.
- **Report concerns.** Any abuse, safeguarding concerns, or situations that make you feel uncomfortable must be reported privately. In the first instance, speak to a Coordinator or follow the Safeguarding Policy (available on our website).
- **Do not offer legal, medical or political advice.** Volunteers must not provide legal, medical or other professional advice, nor express opinions on political developments. Our role is to offer humanitarian support and to signpost people to the relevant actors.
- **Respect confidentiality.** Any information including data must be protected in line with GDPR and privacy rules. Do not take photos, speak publicly, or post on social media about individuals you meet.
- **Professional and values-aligned conduct.** Volunteers are expected to dress appropriately, wear RSE identification whilst on duty and approach all interactions with calmness, respect and dignity.
- **Follow policies and Coordinator instructions.** All volunteers must follow Refugee Support Europe policies and the guidance of the Coordinator on duty. Some instructions may feel challenging, but they are informed by extensive experience and safeguarding considerations.

- **Do not question policies in front of members.** Concerns or disagreements about policies must never be raised in front of the people we support. Public disagreement can be unsettling and undermines trust.

Volunteering Check List

Dignity Centres are where we live out our organisational values of dignity, solidarity and community. Here's our check list of how you can put our Code of Conduct into practice.

- **Do your research.** Even before you start volunteering you can empower yourself by understanding the environment and most importantly the people you'll be working with. Up-skilling yourself about the context and the types of journeys people have undertaken will equip you to be a better volunteer and engage more fully with our members.
- **Smile and be polite.** Treat everyone with the same level of respect and consideration you would offer a valued colleague or customer.
- **Celebrate diversity.** We support people with different backgrounds and experiences. Meeting people where they are is fundamental to treating people with dignity. Never assume that you know more than them, even when the person cannot explain themselves well due to language barriers.
- **Dress appropriately.** The Centre is a professional working environment with cultural sensitivities. Clothing should be practical and respectful; shorts and skirts must be at least knee-length.
- **Ask what you can do.** There may be quieter moments, but there is always work to be done. If you are unsure how to help, ask a Coordinator or staff member.
- **Be identifiable.** Volunteers must wear be clearly identifiable whilst volunteering via RSE branded clothing, such as T-shirts and jumpers, or ID such as lanyards.
- **Get off your phone!** Checking messages or taking urgent calls may occasionally be necessary, but phone use should be kept to a minimum. Scrolling or non-essential use while volunteering is not appropriate.
- **Look after wellbeing.** Monitor your own wellbeing and that of fellow volunteers. We have a shared responsibility to look after ourselves and one another.
- **Share ideas.** We value continuous learning and improvement, and welcome feedback and suggestions. Please share them with a Coordinator or staff member.