



Volunteering for Asylum seekers

Volunteers for Health, Northants Programme

Guidance

As of August 2025, the latest UK legislation and policy guidance confirms that asylum seekers are allowed to volunteer at any stage of the asylum process, and this is actively encouraged by the Home Office [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#).

Volunteering Rights for Asylum Seekers

- **Volunteering is permitted** throughout the asylum process, regardless of whether the asylum claim is pending, refused, or under further submission.
- Volunteering must be **unpaid** and for the benefit of the community, such as through charities or public sector organisations.
- It is seen as a way to support integration and contribute positively to society.

Employment Restrictions

- Asylum seekers cannot work unless their claim has been outstanding for over 12 months and the delay is not their fault.
- If granted permission to work:
 - Applications before 3 April 2024 are limited to jobs on the Shortage Occupation List.
 - Applications from 4 April 2024 onwards are limited to jobs on the Immigration Salary List [\[1\]](#).

Children and Volunteering

- Children under 18 are not permitted to work, but they can participate in work experience or training as part of their education.
- The welfare of children must be considered in any decision regarding permission to work.

Legislative Context

The Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill introduced in January 2025 aims to repeal parts of previous controversial legislation (e.g., the Illegal Migration Act 2023 and the Safety of Rwanda Act 2024), which had limited asylum rights and access to justice [\[3\]](#). However, the bill does not restrict volunteering rights and may even signal a shift toward more humane treatment of asylum seekers. Would you like a summary formatted for use in a presentation or briefing for the VfH steering group?

References

- [1] [Permission to work and volunteering for asylum seekers \(accessible\)](#)
- [2] [Permission to work and volunteer.docx - GOV.UK](#)
- [3] [Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill | The Law Society](#)