

Roma Support Group

Volunteer Information Pack

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Roma Support Group

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Dear candidate for a volunteer position,

Thank you for expressing an interest in becoming a volunteer with the Roma Support Group. This introduction pack includes information, which might be useful for you to know before deciding to volunteer for the RSG. Included are the following documents: a List of Current Projects and Volunteering Opportunities, Volunteer Policy and Volunteer Agreement. We are looking forward to hearing from you!

Regards,

*Sylvia Ingmire
RSG Co-ordinator*

Roma Support Group

Current Projects and Volunteering Opportunities

Advice and Advocacy Project

This project is covering the following areas of general advice: welfare, housing, money management & debt, access to health, social services and in-house language support. We see our clients through an appointment system in our office in Canning Town and outreach base in White City, as well as through home visits.

- **Monday, Tuesday, Thursday**
11 am – 5 pm

Venue:
East London, Canning Town

Volunteering opportunities:

- Help with advice and advocacy (under the supervision of RSG advice workers) – useful skills: some experience in the field of advice and advocacy, knowledge of Romany and/or one or more East European language (especially Polish, Slovak, Czech, Romanian and Russian).
- Help at the reception (answering calls from clients, making appointments for clients, simple advice and advocacy) 2pm – 5pm, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday – necessary skills: ability to communicate in English and Polish or Slovak.
- Interpreting for one of the advice workers, 2pm – 5pm, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday – necessary skills: ability to communicate in English and one or more of the following languages: Romany, Romanian, Czech, Russian or Slovak.

- **Wednesday**
10.15 am – 2.30 pm

Venue:
West London, White City

Volunteering opportunities:

- Help with advice and advocacy (under the supervision of RSG advice workers) – useful skills: some experience in the field of advice and advocacy, knowledge of Romany or one or more East European language (especially Polish, Slovak, Czech, Romanian and Russian).
- Interpreting for one of the advice workers– necessary skills: ability to communicate in English and one or more of the following languages: Romany, Romanian, Czech, Russian or Slovak.
- Health Advocacy, facilitating access to NHS (to primary and secondary care), other health related agencies and organisations, health related benefits and interpreting services, interpreting and translating for clients in various situations (for example registration with GP surgeries).

Education Support Project

This project is combating social exclusion of Roma children and youth by supporting them to access primary, secondary, further education as well as vocational training; liaison between Roma parents; tackling bullying and discrimination at schools.

- **Monday – Friday**
10 am – 5 pm

Venue:
East London, Canning Town

Volunteering opportunities:

- Help with access to formal education (under the supervision of RSG worker) – useful skills: some knowledge of education system, knowledge of Romany or one or more East European languages (especially Polish, Slovak, Czech, Romanian and Russian)

<http://www.romasupportgroup.org.uk/education%20support.html>

Mentoring

Mentoring the most excluded and vulnerable Roma children and youth and supporting them to overcome barriers and problems, which they face.

- **Monday – Friday**

Volunteering opportunities:

Working as volunteer mentor - mentors are working with young vulnerable Roma people, aged 16-25 by providing them with one to one support. The Focus of the project is on:

- Young women who due to cultural practices face additional barriers to positively taking part in activities with their peers
- Young people with mental health issues, special needs or physical disabilities
- Substance abusers
- Offenders/former offenders

Volunteer Mentors will receive ongoing support and training to enable them to play their role effectively.

Social Inclusion Schemes for Roma Children and Youth:

Social inclusion schemes include: sport, leisure, art and educational activities, which aim at developing children's self-esteem, confidence as well as empowering them to make positive choices in life. Some of the examples of our activities are: football training, indoor sport activities, music and dance classes, visits to libraries, museums and other outings).

<http://www.romasupportgroup.org.uk/social%20inclusion.html>

Roma Art Project

This project is promoting social inclusion of young people from the Roma community through their participation in music & dance workshops as well as events.

Please contact us for venues and times.

Volunteering opportunities:

- Supportive role in preparing and running of the art project, which includes looking for activities, venues and tutors as well as the administrative support
- Assistance during activities such as art, music and dance workshops
- Organising music and dance events

Useful skills: interest in music and dance, experience in working with vulnerable children and young people.

Sport Project

Football for Young Roma

- **Monday**
5 pm – 6.30 pm

Venue:
East London, East Ham

Volunteering opportunities:

- Playing supportive role in preparation and running of the sport project.

Karate for Young Roma

- **Wednesday**
Evening

Venue:
East London, Manor Park

Volunteering opportunities:

- Playing supportive role in preparation and running of the sport project.

Other youth-related programmes:

- Art activities
- Special summer trips
- Performing Arts – Music and Dance
- Organising and delivering workshops in schools and colleges in London and the South East, which explore Roma history, culture and identity

Volunteering opportunities:

- Playing supportive role in organising and running of the one off events and outings.
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Other volunteering opportunities

- Help with planning, organising and leading trips, outings, workshops, meetings, festivals, school events
- Opportunity to prepare and deliver in-house training in IT, publicity, graphics, website design to project workers and volunteers
- Administrative/fundraising support
- Assisting with the preparation of a new policy documents and conducting related research
- Supportive role in research, writing articles, designing and editing the newsletter with information about our current activities, events, achievements and plans
- Help with regular updating of our website

Roma Support Group Volunteer Policy

Adopted September 2005, Last updated September 2008

Introduction

The Roma Support Group was established in autumn 1998 at a meeting of over 80 Roma at the Holy Cross Church in Kings Cross. The constitution, aims and objectives were adopted at that meeting.

The Roma Support Group is a registered Charity (no: 103782) and a Company Limited by guarantee (no: 4645981).

Aims and Objectives

The *RSG* is committed to improving the quality of life of Roma refugees and migrants from Eastern European countries through advice and advocacy support as well as various projects. See separate list of the projects currently run by the *RSG* on our website: <http://www.romasupportgroup.org.uk>

The *RSG* aims to make the public aware of discrimination and persecution faced by Roma in Europe and also to promote Roma Culture.

Purpose of the Volunteer Policy

The purpose of the policy is to provide overall guidance and direction to staff and volunteers engaged in volunteer involvement and management.

Statement of Principles and Volunteer Role Outlines

The *RSG* is a young and expanding organization whose range of activities strictly depends upon the input of individual volunteers.

The volunteers will not be used to replace paid staff. They will be expected to support *RSG* workers and work in a voluntary capacity within the boundaries of existing projects, alongside the relevant project workers or in a role agreed with the *RSG* co-ordinator.

The volunteers can be involved in various projects currently run by the *RSG* on a regular or occasional basis.

However after probation period of one month volunteer will be expected to:

- Volunteer for *RSG* for the period of at least three months;
- Declare their interests and their availability and agree upon a role in the organization;
- Keep the *RSG* supervisor up to date with any relevant changes in their circumstances and review their role in the organization in case of such changes;
- Perform the tasks allocated by their supervisor to the best of their abilities and if in any doubt about action to be taken, the volunteer will always consult with allocated supervisor or co-ordinator;
- Be in regular contact with the supervisor;
- Be punctual and inform their supervisor as early as possible if they are going to be late or cannot attend or perform their task.

Supervision and Support

The volunteers will work under the supervision of a relevant co-ordinator or a member of *RSG* staff. The volunteers will have regular supervision and support meetings with a relevant supervisor. The role of the volunteer will be outlined and agreed at the beginning of their volunteering for *RSG* and could be reviewed at any given time at the request of the volunteer or the supervisor.

Recruitment

The *RSG* is advertising for volunteers in a wide range of ways to allow equal opportunities for people from different backgrounds wishing to volunteer. We will take all applicants seriously and treat them fairly and equally, with due respect for their time and abilities.

- To become a volunteer the candidate has to meet our criteria and needs (which are related to currently run activities and projects), as well as to agree with our aims and objectives and be interested in at least one of our activities or projects.
- A potential volunteer will be initially interviewed by the relevant co-ordinator or *RSG* worker in person or on the phone. That will be followed up by the initial procedures and the induction process if both parties agree that the candidate is suitable to volunteer for *RSG*

(taking in account the needs and the requirements of the *RSG* as well as the needs and interests of the candidate).

New volunteer will be asked to:

- Fill in the Volunteer Assessment form;
- Provide references or give satisfactory explanation why it is not possible;
- Fill in the Disclosure application form; (*Everybody who works at RSG needs to have a disclosure carried out by The Disclosure and Barring Service*).
- Take part in the induction process.

Induction and Training

Volunteers will take part in an induction process which will start before they commence their duties and it will progress during their probation period. It will be specially prepared for each person since different people might have different requirements. (More details about induction process can be found in the *RSG* Induction Procedure.)

The Right training is very important for all volunteers. The *RSG* supervisor will make sure that each volunteer has the opportunity of the training relevant to their role in the organization.

Expenses

The volunteer can expect that reasonable expenses will be reimbursed. All the out-of-pocket expenses approved by supervisor will be reimbursed on the same day or at the first opportunity. The volunteers will be expected to provide receipts for the expenses they want to claim.

Insurance, Health and Safety

The *RSG* is covered by Employers Liability Insurance.
Volunteers are covered by the *RSG* Health and Safety Policy.

Equal opportunities

All volunteers will be expected to operate within the context of equal opportunities and anti discriminatory practice, as practised at the *RSG* and outlined in Equal Opportunities Policy.

Ending your Volunteering

If you wish to end volunteering at *RSG* then please let us know. We acknowledge this as a realistic possibility, however it is very useful for us (for future reference) to know the reasons why volunteers decide to leave. We will

be pleased to write references for any volunteer who has engaged with the *RSG* for more than six months.

If something occurs whilst undertaking your volunteer role, which prevents you from continuing volunteering at *RSG*, please tell us about this.

Roma Support Group **Volunteer Agreement**

The *RSG* service is committed to the principle of volunteering and we wish to assure you of our appreciation of your volunteering with us. We will do the best we can to provide you with a supportive environment and the opportunity to develop skills, knowledge and make your experience as a volunteer with us enjoyable and rewarding.

The following information has been prepared to clarify the reasonable expectation of both the volunteer and The *RSG*. There is no intention between the volunteer and The *RSG* to create legal relation and this document reflects only voluntary commitment and not contractual obligation.

As an organisation we are committed:

- To provide, via an induction, information about the *RSG*, it's staff, policies and procedures;
- That you will have a named supervisor who will provide support whilst you volunteer with the *RSG* and who will be your first point of contact;
- To ensure that you are clear about our expectations in relation to the standards of service and what we expect of you;
- That we will ensure that you have access to training and that you are able to extend your knowledge and skills;
- To reimburse any subsistence and travel expenses in accordance with our policies;
- To ensure that you are dealt with in accordance with our equal opportunities policy;
- We will endeavour to resolve in a fair and just manner any problems, grievances or difficulties, which may be encountered while you volunteer with us.

As a volunteer I agree to the following:

- To become familiar with and adhere to the *RSG*'s values, aims and objectives, rules, procedures, standards and policies;
- To become involved in the service as requested by the staff;
- To raise any issues and problems with my supervisor;

- To develop an awareness and understanding of the issues dealt with by the *RSG* and to take advantage of opportunities to extend my skills and knowledge;
- To maintain the confidentiality of matters relating to the business of the *RSG* and individual service users and staff.